No. 78 MARCH 7, 1914 5 CENTS

Nick Carter Stories

THE CRIME OF A MONEY KING OR THE BATTLE OF THE MAGNATES

STREET & SMITH ~ PUBLISHERS ~ NEW YORK

NICK CARTER STORIES

Issued Weekly. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 79-89 *Seventh Ave., New York.*

Copyright, 1914, by STREET & SMITH. *O. G. Smith and G. C. Smith, Proprietors.*

Terms to NICK CARTER STORIES Mail Subscribers.
(*Postage Free.*)
Single Copies or Back Numbers, 5c. Each.

3 months	65c.	One year	$2.50
4 months	85c.	2 copies one year	4.00
6 months	$1.25	1 copy two years	4.00

How to Send Money—By post-office or express money order, registered letter, bank check or draft, at our risk. At your own risk if sent by currency, coin, or postage stamps in ordinary letter.

Receipts—Receipt of your remittance is acknowledged by proper change of number on your label. If not correct you have not been properly credited, and should let us know at once.

No. 78. NEW YORK, March 7, 1914. **Price Five Cents.**

THE CRIME OF A MONEY KING;

Or, THE BATTLE OF THE MAGNATES.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE CAPITALIST'S STRONG ROOM.

"There is the wreck, Mr. Carter. Now let me see what you can make of it?" and the speaker pointed into the room through the open door, indicating as he did so, a chaos of confusion, such as can only be left behind by expert burglars, who have made use of powerful explosives to accomplish their ends.

"Has anything been disturbed, since you discovered that you had been robbed?" asked the detective.

"Nothing. Not a soul has crossed this threshold, sir," replied the financier.

"You do not, of course, include yourself in that category," remarked the detective, turning a smiling face toward his client.

"Indeed, but I do. I have said that not a soul has crossed this threshold since the discovery of the crime. I mean that, literally."

"What, sir? Do you mean that you have not even investigated the demolished safe in order to discover the extent of your losses?"

"I haven't investigated a thing. I haven't touched a thing. I have not entered this room. The moment I discovered what had happened, I determined that if the rascals had left a possible clew to their identities behind them, it should not be effaced or destroyed by any act of mine."

"Humph!" said Nick, pondering a moment. "In that case," he added presently, while he reached out one hand and closed the door which the financier had thrown open before them, "I think we will leave it undisturbed for a while."

"Do you mean that you do not wish to go inside the room now?"

"Not just yet, sir."

"Why not?"

"Because it is one of my plans to begin at the beginning of a case, whenever that is possible. Unfortunately, in most cases it is utterly impossible. I have to begin in the middle and work both ways. Just now there is no such necessity."

"I'm afraid that I do not understand you, Mr. Carter," said the financier.

"Sit down, then, and I will explain."

The room into which they had peered for a moment only, and which seemed in that one moment to have been so entirely wrecked by the marauders who had visited it, was situated in a windowless extension, which had been erected at the rear of the back parlor, or library, of the mansion occupied by the man who at that time was looked upon as one of the world's greatest and most successful financiers.

This library, in which the great man and the detective now settled themselves, was often described by the capitalist as his workshop.

The walls were covered with bookshelves, which groaned beneath the weight of the books they held, and in the center of the room was a great, square, flat-top desk littered with papers. It was in this library that the great man worked and labored over his figures, his schemes, the formation of syndicates and trusts, his banking accounts, and whatever interested him—after his office had closed for the day.

It was in this library that he received other capitalists whenever they had in hand some great operation concerning which it was necessary to confer and to plan, and it was here that coups had been arranged in which they had played with millions, as a street arab plays with pennies and marbles.

The back room beyond it—the windowless room—the wrecked room, as it might now appropriately be called, was one of even greater and deeper mysteries.

The financier had built it there himself long after he purchased the house, and it had been constructed entirely according to plans made by himself.

And it was a remarkable room.

It was fireproof, and was supposed to be burglar-proof as well.

As great care had been devoted to its construction as is ever devoted to the erection of a safe-deposit institution for the financial section of the city, where hundreds of millions of dollars in securities are deposited for safe-keeping.

The room was windowless, as has been said. There was not even a skylight in the ceiling. Not a ray of daylight, save what sifted through the door which opened into the library, had ever found its way into that apartment since it was built, and yet a person never realized that fact, if by any chance he was permitted to enter there, because of the masterly arrangement of the electric lights which, enveloped in scientifically constructed globes, produce exactly the effect of daylight.

Ventilation? Ah! yes; there was ventilation. The architect had provided for that in a way known only to themselves—and to the capitalist for whom they designed the room.

The room of the Venetian Council of Ten, where the terrible rule of the Doges was enforced, was not more secret, and, in a sense, more terrible, than this tomb-like room.

It was smaller by ten feet than the outer surface of the walls which surrounded it.

The ceiling was dome-shaped, painted blue, and studded with stars in gilt, to represent the sky which never could be seen from inside its walls; and in the very center of that dome was a huge ground-glass bulb or globe from which a soft, white light was radiated; and there were other bulbs and globes in other places to add to that light when desired.

A thick, heavy, velvet carpet covered the floor. A long table, covered with billiard cloth, extended through the center of it, and arranged around the table were twelve high-backed, carved, mahogany chairs, upholstered in leather—five on each side of the table, and one at either end of it.

There was a revolving bookcase at one end of the table, the shelves of which were always nearly empty—save when there was to be a meeting held there, and then it became filled in a mysterious manner—filled with the books desired for that especial occasion; with books which disappeared after the meeting had adjourned.

And there was no other furniture in that room.

But there was a vault under it. A vault to which approach was had only by descending a flight of iron stairs, situated at one end of the strange room, and at the bottom of which the visitor was confronted by a heavy metal door, supplied with a time lock of the latest and most approved pattern; and beyond that door there were other doors still, and all of them were supplied with combination locks.

Passing those doors, the vault extended almost entirely under the room above it—extended, in fact, to the limit of the thick walls which have already been referred to.

In the room itself, over the vault, there were safes—three of them.

One was a huge affair, and which might well have done service in a bank with an extensive business—a safe which, as far as appearances went, should have defied any and all attempts to crack it. Another was less bulky, but still a large safe—larger than most men would require for their household uses.

The third one was quite a small one, and it stood against the wall almost within reach of the chair at the upper end of the table.

And yet, taken by itself, even this third safe was by no means diminutive. One might easily have stowed away a fortune inside it.

And now, if you please, we will return to the library where Jared Logan, capitalist, and Nick Carter, detective, were facing each other across the flat-top desk already mentioned.

"Before attempting to find out what you do not know," said Nick, smiling across the table at his client, "I think it would be well to ask a few questions in order to discover what you do know. It is now half past eight o'clock in the morning—approximately forty minutes since you telephoned for me to come here with all speed."

"Yes, it was a quarter of eight when I discovered that I had been robbed."

"But, my dear sir, you have not discovered that you have been robbed."

"The devil I haven't! I'd like to know what you call it, then."

"According to your own statement, you have not crossed that threshold since you discovered that some person, or persons, have made use of explosives inside the room."

"Correct, I haven't. I wished——"

"Yes, you have already told me why, but the fact remains, that, not having investigated, you do not know that you have been robbed."

"Humph! Well, I'm not green enough to suppose that a burglar, who is expert enough to get inside that room at all, and get away after it—who is sufficiently master of his profession to blow open those safes in the way it has been done, as we can see from the doorway, is also a fool."

"Probably not."

"If he could do all that, he could also get at what is inside those safes, couldn't he?"

"Without doubt."

"And finding things of value there, after he has taken all the trouble to get at them, he would not be likely to go away again and leave them there, would he?" questioned the financier, rather petulantly.

"Hardly."

"Well, then, the deduction—as you detectives put it—is that I have been robbed."

"Certainly."

"It seems to me that we are uselessly wasting time, Mr. Carter."

"Perhaps, and yet I never waste time when I am engaged in work of this kind. It is certain that somebody has been inside that room and that explosives have been used there. Who has used them?"

"That is what I want you to find out."

"You have already told me that you heard nothing in the night."

"Not a sound."

"No suspicion of an explosion near you came to you or to any member of your household?"

"Not a suspicion."

"And yet it would seem that an explosion, sufficiently

powerful to do the damage that has been wrought there, would have shook the house like an earthquake."

"It would seem so, but it didn't."

"You have questioned everybody in the house?"

"Every one of them."

"And not one of them felt a shock, or heard a suspicious noise during the night?"

"Not one—if they tell me the truth, and I suppose they do that, for I know of no reason why they should not."

"You say that you opened the door into the strong room at a quarter to eight?'

"Yes, within a minute or two of that time."

"Of course you pressed the button which turns on the lights in there before you opened the door?"

"I always do that."

"So that, when you did throw the door open, you saw instantly what had happened?"

"Yes, instantly."

"Is it not strange that you did not rush into the room at once?"

"No, I do not think so."

"Why?"

"Because I am not given to impulsive acts. If I were, I would be a poor man instead of a rich one; a failure instead of a success."

"What was your first appreciable emotion upon making the discovery you did?"

"Anger, I think."

"Naturally, but what was your impulse, even if you did not act upon it?"

"To swear."

"Doubtless. Did you swear?"

"I am afraid I did."

"But you did not enter the room?"

"No, I did not. I have told you that often enough for you to know it by this time."

"Did you not feel an impulse to enter it, even though you did not do so?"

"No, I did not."

"Why not?"

"I can't tell you, only that I did not. I thought instantly that I had been robbed. I thought I knew what had been stolen, or what the robbers had attempted to steal. I realized that if the robbers were going to be caught, that you were the man who would be most likely to catch them, and that if I expected you to do it, I must not place an obstacle in your way. That is about the best explanation of my conduct that I can give you," concluded the financier.

CHAPTER II.

AN EXPLOSION WHICH MADE NO NOISE.

"So you stepped back and closed the door at once?" asked the detective.

"Well, not precisely at once. I think I stood for some time, looking into the room before I decided just what would be best for me to do."

"But you did not call anybody?"

"Certainly not. It was my own affair. Nobody else's."

"That is true. When you did turn away, what did you do?" asked the detective.

"I came here to this desk, took up this telephone, and called you up."

"And then—after that?"

"I looked in at the door again."

"For what purpose?"

"To study the wreck, I suppose."

"And to wonder why you had not been disturbed by the noise of the explosion?"

"Yes, just that."

"And after that——"

"I closed the door again and called the servants."

"Did you call them to this room?"

"No, I went to the dining room and ordered them to come there."

"Did you tell them what had happened?"

"Certainly not. I am not in the habit of telling my business to my servants."

"What did you say to them?"

"I asked them if any one of them had heard a noise like an explosion in the night, or if any of them had been disturbed by a noise."

"And none of them had?"

"Not one of them."

"You did not miss one of them in making your inquiries?"

"No, I did not make a personal inquiry of each one, but I directed the butler to do so."

"So you really received your report from him?"

"Yes."

"Satisfied on that point, what did you do next?"

"On the contrary, I was greatly dissatisfied on that point."

"Very likely, nevertheless, what did you do next?"

"I made the same inquiries of the members of my family."

"All of them?"

"Certainly."

"And did you tell them, or any one of them, what had happened?"

"No. I do not discuss my business affairs with my family, under any circumstances."

"What reason did you give for making the inquiry?"

"I pretended that I had been so disturbed during the night, and wished to know if any others had experienced the same disturbance."

"Well?"

"They concluded that I had been dreaming. Not one of the members of my family had heard a sound, which was unusual, or had been disturbed in any way, as far as I could determine."

"And then——"

"I came here to the library to await your arrival. You came within ten minutes, I should say, after I returned to this room."

"During that ten minutes, did you open the door into the strong room again?"

"I did not."

"You merely sat here and waited for me?"

"That is all."

"So that at the present moment, to the best of your knowledge, and aside from the burglars themselves, you and I are the only persons who are aware of the condition of that room, or that a robbery has been even attempted?"

"Yes, sir."

"Now, Mr. Logan, I suppose you are provided with a list of everything that was in that room when you closed it before you retired last night?"

"No, I haven't exactly a list, but I can readily make one from my books, and with the aid of my memory. The list itself is now—or, at least, was—in that room, in the small safe. I consider that room the safest place of deposit within my reach."

"Naturally. You were in the strong room last night, were you?"

"I was."

"For a long time?"

"An hour or more; I do not remember exactly."

"Where were you? I mean in what part of the room were you?"

"I was down below in the vault most of the time," was Mr. Logan's reply to the question.

"Was this door open while you were there?"

"Certainly not. I always locked myself in the room when I went into it."

"And you did not neglect that precaution last night?"

"No, I did not."

"What time did you leave the strong room?"

"A few minutes after midnight."

"How is the outer door of the vault fastened?"

"With a time lock."

"Did you set the time lock when you left it last night?"

"Yes."

"For what time?"

"For half past seven o'clock this evening. I had arranged for a meeting of some gentlemen in that room, for that hour."

"And you wished to have access to the vault while they were here?"

"Yes."

"From the door where we looked into the strong room, the door of the vault cannot be seen. Have you an idea that the vault has been blown open, like the safes?"

"No, to tell the truth I have not."

"Why?"

"Because I do not think that in the time at the disposal of the burglars—that is, from after midnight last night until seven-forty-five this morning—any burglar in the world could work his way into that vault. I think you will find the vault all right."

"I see. It was because you felt that the vault was all right in any case, that you were content not to enter the room until my arrival."

"I have already told you why I waited."

"Your most valuable papers were, of course, in the vault?" asked Nick.

"No, they were not. That is the devil of it."

"Eh? How is that?"

"There were securities and documents in the three safes which I would not care to lose."

"Doubtless. Now, Mr. Logan, I suppose you are anxious to get to your office?"

"Indeed I am. It is important that I should go at once."

"I can see that by your evident nervous haste in replying to my questions. When will you be able to return here?"

"At five o'clock this afternoon."

"Very good. Then I will meet you here at five o'clock."

"What! Aren't you going to investigate that room?"

"Not until you are ready to investigate it with me."

"But——"

"When you are at liberty to give me two hours or more of your time, we will go in there together, if you will be good enough to have your list ready so that we can check off the things, documents, securities, papers, et cetera, as we find them."

"But I supposed that I could leave you here to work while I was downtown."

Nick smiled.

"Mr. Logan," he said, "would you have given me the run of that room, and of everything inside it yesterday? I don't think you would—and I don't want it now."

"Humph! All right. I see the point. In that case, I will meet you here at three o'clock instead of five."

"Very good. Three o'clock be it, and be sure not to forget the list."

CHAPTER III.

THREE KEYS TO THE PRIVATE DOOR.

As Nick Carter rose to take his departure he paused, and, leaning with one hand on the table between them, he said to the capitalist:

"Mr. Logan, how many keys are there to that door—the door which admits you from this room into the strong room?"

"Three."

"Where are they?"

"One of them—the one I make constant use of—is in my pocket."

"Very well, and the others?"

"Of the other two, one is locked in a drawer in the private safe in my office in Wall Street, and the other is in a safe-deposit vault."

"Where?"

"At the Finance and Credit Company's bank."

"Very good. Now I am going to make a strange request of you before we part."

"What is it?"

"I wish you would give me now the key to that room you have in your pocket, also an order, through one of your clerks or your confidential man, whom you will send to meet me, for the key deposited at the Finance and Credit Company's bank, and also send to me, by the messenger who will meet me there, the key that is in the private safe at your office."

"What in the world——"

"I beg that you will not question me—simply that you will humor me. You know I have peculiar and rather original methods of work."

"Yes; and it strikes me that this is both peculiar and original."

"You have no objection?"

"None whatever; it shall be as you request."

"Thank you."

"You might get in the automobile with me. We will drive directly to the bank and get the key that is there, and then continue on to the office for the other one. In the meantime, I can give you this one now. It is an unusual thing to permit these keys to go out of my possession, Mr. Carter. I cannot for the life of me imagine why you should desire it."

"I will tell you. You have already told me that you have not entered that room since you discovered that somebody had broken into it. Now there is one peculiar fact which in the excitement seems to have escaped your attention."

"What is that?"

"The very simple one that although there has been a very general wreck inside that room, the room itself was not broken into. There seems to be no indication that this door has been tampered with."

"By thunder!" cried Mr. Logan; "you are right. I had not thought of that."

"And, of course, this is the only entrance to that room, is it not? The only means of gaining access to it?" questioned the detective.

"Certainly it is."

"Very well, then. Somebody, unknown to you, has entered that room. Whoever did enter it, has made use of a key in doing so. You say there are only three keys in existence, one of which is in your pocket at the present moment."

"That's right."

"And I infer that the key now in your pocket has not been out of your possession?"

"It certainly has not—not since it was made for me at the time the place was built."

"Good. Now do you appreciate what naturally follows your declarations?"

"Suppose you tell me?"

"Why, either that there is a fourth key to that room, since the parties who entered it undoubtedly made use of a key, or that one of the three keys you have mentioned was used."

"You are right, Mr. Carter; that is as plain as the nose on your face."

"Consequently, if you insist that the key in your pocket has never been out of your possession, and if there is no fourth key—and the likelihood is that there is not—one of the remaining keys—the one at the bank or the one at your office—is missing.'

"No doubt of that."

"Now, another question before we start."

"Well?"

"Have you ever made use of either of the other keys?"

"I don't understand."

"I mean, have they been kept where they are now, ever since the vaults were built, and have you made a practice of using only this one, or have you interchanged them at intervals?"

"I have never turned the lock of that door with either of them but once, and that was when they were placed in my hands when the room was completed. I tried them at that time to see if they would fit; after that I deposited them at once as I have told you and have never made use of them since that time."

"Very good. Now one of the reasons why I wish to go for those keys is, of course, to see if they have been undisturbed where you placed them; and the other is that I do not care that you shall have an opportunity yourself to enter that room now until after I have examined it."

"What in thunder do you mean by that?"

The capitalist started in anger, but Nick only smiled, as he added:

"I know perfectly well that you have no intention nor desire to do so, but I also know that you can never foresee the exigencies which might arise in your business. Now, for instance," the detective went on, "if you arrive at your office you should find that you greatly needed certain papers which are in that room, you would not hesitate to go there after them—supposing that the burglars have left them there. There would be no objection to such a proceeding on your part—that is, no good objection, for you would explain to me afterward that you had been there, what you had done, and what you had disturbed."

"Well, then?"

"If I have the three keys in my possession, you could not get into that room unless I was present. You would not be prevented from entering it, but you would have to send for me before you did so."

"All right. That is a good idea. Shall we go now?"

"Yes; to meet here again at three o'clock."

"All right. Here is one of the keys. We will drive directly to the bank and secure the other one, and then to my office for the third one. Is that the idea?"

"Exactly."

In due course of time both of the keys referred to were turned over to the detective, for both were discovered easily where they had been deposited.

As Nick took leave of the financier at his office door, he said:

"I now have the three keys in my possession. It seems evident that none of these keys has been used to enter the strong room, and that, therefore, there must be a fourth key. However, we will not go into that now. You will be sure to meet me at three o'clock?"

"Certainly, I will be there on the minute."

"Then I will get along. I hope you will be prepared to devote the remainder of the afternoon—and the evening also, up to the time when you expect the gentleman for that meeting you mentioned. I believe you said that was to be at half past seven?"

"Yes, I had forgotten it for the moment. I hope, by the way, that you can finish your investigation so that we can have things straightened up a little by that time."

"Oh, there is no doubt of that."

When Nick left the Wall Street office, he hurried directly to police headquarters, arriving there a few minutes before ten o'clock, and just in time to meet Inspector Martin in the corridor.

"Good," he said. "I want five minutes alone with you, inspector."

"Nothing easier, Nick. Come right in," was the reply; and as soon as they were seated together in the private office, he added:

"What's up now, old man?"

"I want you to do me a great favor."

"Indeed! How much do you want?" smiled the inspector.

"Nonsense! I want a witness to a certain little thing I am about to do, and I do not want anybody but you to be that witness."

"Oho! Something doing, eh?"

"Yes, a lot."

"What's up, Nick?"

"Old Crœsus—otherwise Jared Logan—has been robbed."

"You don't say so?"

"You, of course, know the strong room he had built directly behind the library of his Fifth Avenue house?"

"I have heard about it; I have never seen it."

"Well, it is like Kansas City was ten days after the boom; you ought to see it now."

"What's the matter with it?"

"It looks as if a cyclone had struck it."

"Blown up, eh?"

"Yes; I haven't been inside it yet, since the explosion, because I wouldn't go into it unless the old man was with me. He wanted me to make my examination while he was downtown attending to business to-day, but I balked."

"Quite right."

"But as a matter of fact, I do want to see it in the meantime."

"Oho! That is the game, is it?"

"That is just the game—or, rather, that is only a part of the game."

"What's the rest of it?"

"I'm not going to disturb anything, or even to make a very thorough examination, until old Crœsus is with me, but there are certain little things which I would like to arrange inside that room before he enters it with me, and I want you to witness them."

"And naturally you don't wish him to know that you have been there."

"That's the idea."

"How are you going to prevent it? You can't get into the house without the butler's knowing it, can you, Nick?"

"No; but I can fool the butler, all right. Will you do the trick with me?"

"Will I? Sure thing, Nick. I'm ready."

CHAPTER IV.

THE WORK OF AN ELECTRIC DRILL.

Nick had his automobile waiting at the door of police headquarters, and with the inspector at his side, he was soon being driven rapidly uptown toward the great financier's home.

"Now, Nick," said the inspector, while they were thus engaged, "suppose you put me onto the whole layout."

"I don't want to do that, George, for the reason that I want to get your opinion upon several matters connected with it, without there being an opportunity of biasing your judgment by reason of a previous opinion expressed by me."

"All right."

"Remember that I will enter the room for the first time when we enter it together, so you will have the same opportunity that I do."

"You have already looked into the room, you say?"

"Yes; from the open doorway."

"And what did you see from there?"

"Merely that all three of the safes within that room had been blown open. I could not determine, from where I stood, whether the vault door had been tampered with or not."

"You cannot see it from the place where you stood?"

"No, it is down a flight of stairs at the other end of the room, and so out of sight."

"What did old Crœsus have to say about it?"

"He knew as little as I."

"What! Do you mean to say that he had not entered the room, either?"

"Yes."

"That's odd, isn't it?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's an odd character, isn't he, George?"

The inspector turned a shrewd glance toward Nick, while he drawled in reply:

"Rather."

After that they rode on in silence until just before the automobile drew up in front of the door of the financier's home. Then the inspector remarked:

"How are you going to prevent that butler from telling his master that we have been here?"

"By not making any effort to do so."

"Eh? How is that?"

"Why, if the old man told the truth, the butler has no idea that a burglary has been committed, so he won't think there is anything to tell. He knew that his master telephoned for me this morning, and he was told, in my presence, to admit me at any time without question, as I had some special work to do there. He will simply admit us, conduct us to the library, and go about his business. It will never occur to him that this call is not a part of the arrangements made this morning. He will not mention it to his master unless he is asked about it—and he won't be asked about it, that's all."

"Well, here we are."

As Nick had predicted, they were admitted and shown to the library without question; and as soon as they were alone Nick fastened the door which opened into the hallway and then quickly unlocked and threw open the door of the strong room.

"There you are," he said. Look."

At the same moment he stepped back, and thus permitted the inspector to cross the threshold in advance of him.

Then they both came to a halt.

It was a strange sight that met their eyes.

The table, which has been described as occupying the center of the room, had been pushed considerably out of position, so that it extended diagonally across it. Three of the twelve chairs which ordinarily surrounded it, were overturned on the floor, two others were on the top of the table, and the remainder had been crowded back against the wall in various attitudes, so that they would be out of the way.

On the floor in front of the safes, or thrust to one side of them, were bundles of bedding sufficient in quantity almost to stock a boarding house. Many of these articles were considerably blackened, showing to what use they had been put.

"They had enough of that stuff to have muffled quite an explosion," remarked the inspector.

"Yes; and they evidently succeeded in muffling it, too, for not a soul in the house heard a disturbance of any kind."

The inspector approached close to the largest of the three safes and examined it critically, while Nick stood watching him, with a smile on his face.

A moment later, the inspector passed from that safe to the next one, and after spending a few moments there, went to the third one; and all the while Nick stood looking on, smilingly, but not once attempting to enter upon any close examination for himself.

Presently Inspector Martin straightened up again and looked around at Nick, and, perceiving the smile on the detective's face, he said:

"You had some reason to suspect what I have just discovered, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"What gave you your suspicion?"

"The fact that the noise of an explosion was not

heard, and that there was no jar of the house sufficient to awaken the occupants."

"Humph! Nothing else?"

"Nothing else that is tangible."

Have you looked down the stairway yet, toward the door of the vault?"

"No, not yet."

"Neither have I, but I'll make you a bet about it."

"What? That we will find it in much the same condition as these safes?"

"Yes."

"I think the same; but——"

"But what?"

"Why, according to every precedent, to the claims made by the companies who manufacture safes and vaults, and by our own experiences, it would require any burglar, even with the very best of tools at his command, a dozen hours or more to break into a vault constructed after the manner of the one that is here."

"Yes; but with the tools that have been used here—if my idea is correct—he ought to accomplish it in an hour."

"That is my idea."

"As a matter of fact, how long a time was this room unobserved?"

"About six and a half or seven hours. No more."

"Humph! Shall we look at the vault now?"

"I'm ready."

A glance down the iron stairway toward the vault door indicated that their admitted suspicions were correct.

Down there, they discovered still more quantities of bedding, also, that the door of the vault had been drilled and blown open finally by the same magic means that had been employed on the safes.

The inspector was on the point of descending the stairs when the detective put out a hand and detained him.

"Don't, old man," he said. "I wish you wouldn't—not just yet."

"Why not?" asked the inspector, drawing back.

"I don't want to touch a thing in this room until I come into it with Logan himself."

"I see. Well, that is a good idea. I approve of it. All the same, there is something down there, on the floor in front of that door, which might tell us a lot about this new system of getting into a safe, eh?"

"Assuredly. But if it is there now, it should be there also when I return. Don't you think so?" and Nick smiled into the face of the inspector.

For a moment the two men stood looking into each other's eyes, and then the inspector slowly extended his hand, and clasped that of the detective.

"Nick," he said, "you're a corker. I hadn't thought of that."

"Hadn't you? It is what I brought you here for. That is why I wanted you here for a witness—aside, of course, from my wish to get your general opinion about the whole thing."

"We can discuss that at any time now. The point is that you expect that somebody else will enter this room between now and three o'clock?"

"That's the point."

"Old Crœsus?"

"No, I haven't gone that far yet."

"Who, then?"

"Some person who has possession of that fourth key to the strong-room door."

"Are there four keys?"

"There are supposed to be only three, and I have those in my possession. Do you suppose, inspector, that there can be any other way than that door to enter this room?"

The inspector ran his eyes searchingly around the room, touching, it seemed, upon every inch of space upon walls, ceiling, and floor.

"It would seem not," he remarked presently.

"At least, there is none visible, is there?"

"Certainly not."

"Now, regarding that broken part of an implement, which you saw at the foot of the steps which leads to the vault, and which you were on the point of going down to inspect a little closer; do you think it necessary that we obtain a closer view of it at present?"

"No, I don't see what good it would do us."

"Nor I."

"An expert electrician might explain the principles of its working to you."

"Yes, if there happens to be an expert electrician in existence who knows anything about such a thing."

"Which is highly improbable, you would say."

"That is just exactly what I would say. The one thing that is perfectly plain to us both is that these safes and the vault were not drilled by the ordinary methods."

"Or, rather, say that they were not drilled at all."

"That is more like it. In fact, that they were burned."

"Sure."

"An electric current, producing heat so great that it has eaten, in a few moments, holes which could not have been drilled in a day, or a week. This is something new, inspector. But it is a fact, as we can plainly see."

CHAPTER V.

FOOTPRINTS ON THE STAIRS.

"Well, Nick, I am only a witness; what is the next move?"

"To arrange so that I will know positively if any one visits this room between now and three o'clock."

"You seem to be in no hurry to leave it now."

"Oh, yes, I am. I am going now, if you are ready."

"I'm ready."

"Then, if you will step through that door into the library, I'll set my little trap."

The inspector complied, but paused in the doorway and looked back, watching Nick.

Then the detective took a package from his pocket, and having manufactured an impromptu blowpipe from a sheet of stiff paper he had brought with him from the table in the library, he proceeded to fill it to the brim with the delicate powder from the package.

The powder, as he poured it from the package into the improvised blowpipe was so delicate and light that it would scarcely flow at all, and even as the bulk of it fell into the receptacle he had arranged for it, it also formed a delicate cloud of almost impalpable dust around the detective's head.

When the pipe was filled the detective stepped to the center of the room, and, placing the small end at his lips, blew a sharp blast through it.

Instantly the white powder was expelled from the pipe, and as it went forth it spread in a cloud toward the ceiling of the room and then began slowly to settle down.

Filling the blowpipe a second time, he stepped back nearer to the door where the inspector was standing, and blew another blast in the same way.

Then, having filled it a third time, and sent the last blast of the powder from the doorway itself, he quickly stepped outside the room and closed and locked the door.

"There," he said, "I am afraid that the papers and other things will be somewhat dusty when there is occasion to handle them, but it is a kind of dust that will do no harm, and I am now absolutely certain that no person can enter that room before I do, without leaving traces of his presence that will be plainly visible to me."

"That is as sure as that eggs are eggs," remarked the inspector. "Now, what next?"

"To get away from here as quickly as possible."

Five minutes later they were in the detective's automobile and driving rapidly away.

* * * * * * *

The great financier and the detective met on the doorstep of the capitalist's house.

Nick Carter had approached at a swinging pace from around the corner, and the man of millions had descended at the door from his coupé.

Jared Logan looked at his watch, smiled, and then extended his hand.

"I want to shake hands with the only man I know who can be as punctual as I can," he said genially. "You are exactly on time, Mr. Carter."

"Certainly, sir."

They entered the library together and the financier pointed to a chair.

"I suppose you are ready to begin," he said to Nick.

"Yes, only, if you have no objections, there is one man whom I would like to have at my side during this first examination."

"One of your assistants?"

"No. Inspector Martin, of police headquarters."

The man of millions scowled.

"Why?" he asked. "Do you not consider yourself competent to handle the matter alone?"

"Entirely so, sir."

"Then why not do it?"

"Because, having thought the matter over, I have decided that I would like to have his opinion in support of mine; and you know there is no better man in the world, in his line, than George Martin."

"Unless it is yourself, Mr. Carter."

"You are mistaken, sir. We work upon lines that are entirely different. Martin works upon a mathematical proposition. He has an immense system at his command, and, relatively, he has the aid and support of every detective bureau in the country, while I work comparatively alone. He enters upon the average case as a pilot takes a boat into a harbor with which he is perfectly familiar; I work upon the average case as a skilled pilot would take a craft into a harbor he had never sounded. He hunts down men who are known to be criminals and who have left their pictures in his gallery, of their handiwork in some case he has before had to do with, or his records in some prison; I hunt for men who have not been taken in the commission of crimes before; for men who have never had their pictures taken for the rogues' gallery, and for men who have made no previous records.

"He sees the effect of a crime, and if it was committed by an old hand at the business, he recognizes who did it at once, but if it happens to be by one who has hitherto walked the straight and narrow path, he is almost as much at sea as you would be."

"Well, you see, Carter, I don't care to have a record of this affair on the police blotter."

"There shall be no record of it. The inspector will agree to that."

"Very well. Call him if you like."

Nick seized the telephone, and he soon had the inspector on the other end of the wire. Then, as if they had not seen each other for a month, he said:

"This is Carter. I am at the house of Jared Logan. He is consulting me about an incident that just now happens to interest him, and I have suggested to him that I would like to have you present with me. He has agreed to that. Can you come here at once? We will wait for you and you will be told what the subject of our controversy is when you arrive. What? Right away? All right. Good-by."

Twenty minutes later the inspector was shown into the room.

Nick greeted him as if there had been no previous meeting between them that day, and, of course, gave him the cue regarding his own wishes in that way.

In a few words the detective explained to the inspector what had happened and why he was called, and then rising, he added:

"And now, gentlemen, if you are ready, I think we will enter the room."

"We are ready," said the financier.

"Then, if you and the inspector will stand back for a moment, I would like to enter alone at first. I wish both of you to stand within sight of me, so that I can call your attention to anything I desire to have you notice. If you will remain in the doorway that will be sufficient."

"All right," rejoined the inspector.

Taking one of the keys from his pocket, Nick threw open the door and passed through into the strong room.

He stepped forward very slowly, studying the floor, the walls, the top of the table, the chairs—everything there as he did so; but he had not taken four short steps when he paused, for directly in front of him on the floor, imprinted in the dust made by the fine powder he had blown about the room, was the perfect shape of a human foot.

It had been made by a foot, moreover, which was not shod when it was pressed there. A foot that had worn a stocking, but not a boot; and the first imprint discovered by the detective showed where the owner of that foot had turned to retrace his steps, as if he had for a moment been intent upon approaching the door through which the detective and his companions had just entered, but had changed his mind, turned about, and gone in the other direction.

The reader must understand that these footprints were very indistinct; that they could not been seen at all unless the observer stood directly over them, and that the slightest breath of air disturbed the dust upon which they had been made.

From the doorway where the inspector and Mr. Logan were waiting, they could not be observed at all.

But the detective was careful to make no stir in the air—to create no draft which would disturb the dust in which the footprints were formed.

He took another step forward until he could see perfectly in what direction the footprints tended, and then he called the inspector to him.

"Inspector," he said, "I wish you would step here a moment. Ask Mr. Logan to wait where he is."

Martin was instantly at his side, and Nick, knowing that the inspector needed not to be told why he had called him, began to indicate certain characteristics about the appearance of the safes, thus blinding the understanding of the man in the doorway, and at the same time giving the inspector an opportunity to examine the footprints on the floor.

He had no desire other than that the inspector should see the footprints at the present moment, but he did wish him to know that they were there, and also that he would not permit their companion to discover them—at least, not yet.

After a moment the inspector returned to the doorway and rejoined the financier, and at once Nick took the trail and followed it.

There were two interesting points about his discovery so far. One was that the room had been entered during the interval between eleven o'clock and three; and the other—and quite an important one—was that the entrance had not been made through the regular door.

Nick followed slowly along the path thus made for him until he saw that it led directly to the stairs which descended to the door of the vault, and there, at the head of the stairs, he halted again.

Careful examination showed him that the steps had first ascended the stairs and gone directly to the largest of the three safes; from there, they had approached the smallest of the safes, and from there they had visited the remaining one.

A jumble of marks in front of each safe showed that some time had been spent at each one, and at the smallest safe Nick was assured that the intruder had got down upon one knee for a moment.

From that safe, the footsteps returned to the stairway and descended, but they went only half of the way down, when they turned about and came back again.

This was the time when they crossed the floor in a direct line toward the door into the library, halted when two-thirds of the way across, and returned directly to the stairs, again descending them; and this time, as nearly as Nick could determine from his position at the top of the stairs, they went to the bottom.

Here was a strange thing, and he paused for a moment to think it over before he proceeded.

The footsteps certainly began, and as certainly ended, at the bottom of the vault stairs, and not in the room itself.

CHAPTER VI.

STOLEN: BONDS VALUED AT $255,000,000.

There was yet one further discovery which the detective made while he stood there at the head of the stairs, and that was that the broken portion of the unknown instrument which the inspector had discovered there, four hours earlier, had disappeared; and he smiled as he turned and called the inspector to him the second time.

They were far away from the financier now, so that the detective could speak in a low tone of voice, and accordingly he said:

"You will notice that the instrument which interested you is gone. Now, while I return to the door for Crœsus, you descend the stairs and fan that powder away. I will do the same across the floor. I'll bring him back with me, and we will all enter the vault together. See all that you can see now, for it is the only chance we will have."

He returned to the doorway now, and rejoined the capitalist, who was awaiting him with ill-disguised impatience; and he managed to disturb the footprints on the floor as he did so, in order that the banker might not discover them.

"One would think that you expected to find the burglars waiting here for you," remarked Mr. Logan, with pronounced sarcasm.

"Not exactly that," replied Nick. "However, I did expect to discover some evidence of his presence."

"You might have done that from the doorway. I could see that much from where I stood."

"Oh, yes, but you know you could not see everything."

"Well, what have you discovered? Have the burglars succeeded in getting into the vault?"

Nick looked at his companion narrowly before he replied. Could it be possible that he detected a certain degree of eagerness in that question—as if the man of millions wished to hear that the vault had been entered—as if he were not sure that it had been entered, but, nevertheless, hoped that it had?

Whatever it was, it supplied a new train of thought for the detective, so that a second or two elapsed before he replied, and the banker became impatient.

"Well," he repeated impatiently, "has the vault been blown open also?"

"What would you say if it had, Mr. Logan?" asked Nick, in reply to the banker's question.

"I should say that they were expert workmen who came here, and I should also bring suit against the firm that built that vault."

"Then you will have an opportunity to do so, for the vault is in the same condition as the safes."

"Good Heaven!"

"It is true."

"Then there is no end to what the scoundrels may have stolen."

"I suppose not. Were the securities which you kept here negotiable?"

"Many of them were?"

"And you may have lost—how much?"

"I have no idea. There were some things here that were more valuable to me than money."

"Then our next duty is to determine what is missing, is it not?"

"I should say that it is about time."

"Yes; you have shown remarkable patience for a man who may be the loser of millions."

"Millions! More than that!"

"How so, Mr. Logan?"

"Why, because it is possible that the burglars may have stolen away a promise I have made."

"I don't think I understand you."

"You couldn't unless you had the handling of immense affairs, as I have."

"Still, I wish you would explain."

"To what end?"

"Why, you have engaged me to investigate this affair. In order to do so properly, I must know exactly what is missing—what is lost—what was here that might have been lost. I must know the whole story in order to look for any possible motive which might have existed, more than the one merely for robbery, to induce burglars to make this attack."

"Humph!"

"For, you see there must have been a greater motive than mere robbery, or they would not have come here at all."

"I don't see how you make that out."

"Perhaps the search we will make will demonstrate it to you."

"Perhaps it will."

"Will you explain now what you meant by stating that there is a possibility that they might have stolen a promise you have made?"

"No; I'll wait and see if it has been stolen first."

"Very good. Where was this promise kept?"

"It isn't likely to be kept at all the way things look now."

"Very true, sir. However, until you are more explicit, I cannot call the idea you have expressed by any other name, so I will repeat, where was this promise kept? In one of the safes or in the vault?"

"It was kept in all three."

"In all three?"

"Yes. The promise, as you call it, was represented by certain documents—securities. I placed a certain part of them in each of the safes, and another part of them in the vault."

"You divided them, therefore, into four parts; why?"

"Well, we will say that there were four parts to the the promise, and that I desired, for reasons of my own, to keep them separate."

"Well, here is the smallest of the safes in front of you. Will you be good enough to see if one of the quarters of that strange promise is still inside?"

Logan stooped over. Indeed, he laboriously got down upon one knee, placing it in almost precisely the same spot as that where Nick had discovered the imprint of a knee upon the floor.

For a moment he searched diligently among the chaos of papers which strewed the inside of the wrecked safe, and then he slowly rose to his feet.

"Gone!" he said, without a change of expression on his face, for it was an iron face that had done battle for so many years on Change that it had been schooled never to show a sign of the emotions which might be engendered behind it. "Gone," he repeated; "and you can gamble that the other three parts are gone also."

"From the other safes and the vault, you mean?"

"Yes," said Mr. Logan; and the capitalist stooped over and brushed vigorously at the dust on the knee of his trousers.

"Where the devil did all this dust come from?" he asked. "It wasn't here before."

"When?" asked Nick.

"Why, when I was here last, of course—last night."

"What else is missing from that safe?" asked Nick.

"I don't know yet. Let's take a look at the vault first. We'll begin there, if you please, Mr. Carter. Naturally the most valuable of the possessions I kept in the house were in the vault."

"Very well."

They found the inspector awaiting them at the bottom of the stairs.

"I haven't gone inside the vault," he said, "although I might easily have done so, for the door is opened wide enough. This is a wonderful piece of work on this door. I have been examining it."

"Yes," said Mr. Logan, "I always thought it was wonderful till now; but if it can be set at naught in a few hours' time——"

"I did not refer to the work of building the vault," interrupted the inspector, "but to the work of demolishing it."

"Oh! Well, I suppose that is wonderful also, although I think I should apply another adjective. I should call it a damnable piece of work.

The inspector laughed.

"You do not view it from the standpoint of a professional," he said.

"No, I look at it from the standpoint of a loser."

"Do you understand anything about electricity, Mr. Logan?" asked Nick.

"What the devil has electricity got to do with this thing?" demanded the capitalist.

"Nothing, perhaps. I was thinking only of the extraordinarily heavy wiring you have got around this vault. Was it necessary to have it so heavy?"

"I never inquired. I gave out the contract for the whole thing, and when it was done I paid the bill; that is all I know about it."

"And you naturally supposed that to be quite sufficient, I suppose."

"It ought to be. Now, if you gentlemen will be kind enough to permit me to enter my own vault, and will take notes while I call out to you, I will speedily apprise you with what is missing."

The inside of the vault was roomy. There were two chairs inside it, and these Nick and the inspector occupied, while Jared Logan began his inventory.

Each of the detectives was provided with a pad, and upon these they made notes of everything that was found and everything that was missing, while Nick, who also held the list with which the banker had provided him, in his hand, checked off the several articles as they were called out.

In that way nearly two hours were consumed; and after the inventory of the vault was completed, the safes were visited and inventoried in the same manner, so that it was quite six o'clock by the time that part of their work was finished.

"Now," said Nick, when they had at last completed their immediate labors, "I think, by comparing my opinion with these lists in my hands, I can tell you what papers among those that are missing represented the promise to which you referred."

"All right; tell it. Let's hear you make a guess."

"The promise you referred to was represented by the bonds of the Great American Natural Ore Corporation."

"Right. You've hit it the first time."

"And, according to these notes we have made, those

bonds, to the value of two hundred and fifty-five million dollars, are missing from the vault and the three safes."

"Right again, Carter. You're a wonder. Now, perhaps you can tell me something else."

"What else?"

"How I am to recover them. You see," he added calmly, "if I don't get them back right away I shall engage the services of an undertaker, and provide him with a corpse."

CHAPTER VII.

THE SECRET OF THE STRONG-ROOM STAIR.

"Two hundred and fifty-five million dollars' worth of bonds is quite a sum," said the inspector, uttering a low whistle.

"Particularly when they were left in your care, and were not your personal property," said Mr. Logan.

"But you surely do not mean that you would think of taking your own life if they could not be recovered," said Nick.

"I surely do mean that very thing. The entire value of the bonds is not lost, understand. They are negotiable, it is true, but wide advertising would warn any person from purchasing them. That is not the point."

"What is the point?"

"Well, I dare not confess that they are missing. I dare not advertise the fact that they have been stolen. I am in the position of being placed between an irresistible force and an impassable barrier—pretty certain to be crushed in the mix-up."

"How so?"

"Because, in the first place, I dare not let it be known that the bonds are not still in my possession, and in the second place, if they are not back again in my possession by the evening of the day after to-morrow, my word of honor to my business associates is broken, and —well, I shall not live to tell them so, that's all there is about it," calmly concluded the great financier.

"You take it coolly."

"Why not? It won't help it any to get hot about it, will it?"

"No."

"I will tell you this much about it. Those bonds were deposited with me, personally, at my own earnest solicitation.

"I have been working for almost three years to consummate a certain enormous deal of which those bonds are the basis. In consummating it, I have had to harmonize certain elements that were almost impossible to bring together. By continued effort I have at last succeeded so far that I have made an arrangement whereby the parties directly concerned are to meet here in this room and conclude the deal."

"To-night?" asked Nick, remembering that he had said that there was to be a meeting there that evening.

"No; to-morrow night. The meeting to-night is on the same matter, but is only a part of it. The bonds will not have to appear to-night, but to-morrow night they must be forthcoming. If not——"

"Well? If not?"

"If not, why then the Angel Gabriel could not succeed in convincing my associates that the bonds were not stolen with my connivance. I will be ruined in pocket for one thing, but I could stand that. I am worth something over a hundred millions, as I stand, I suppose, but I could lose it all and begin over without a tremor. That's the kind of a man I am; but there is one thing which I could not lose—and live."

"What is that?"

"Well, some people would call it by the name of honor; but it goes deeper than that."

"How can it go deeper than that?"

"Because it involves some solemn promises which I have made to certain warring factions among the men of wealth and affairs with whom I associate. I cannot explain more fully than that, only to say that if my word is broken—and it will be broken if the bonds are not here, no matter for what reason they might be missing—only to say that if my word is broken in this matter, nothing on earth or in heaven could ever convince my associates that I am not personally responsible for the breaking.

"That is all. Find the bonds for me, Mr. Carter, and I will cheerfully give you a million dollars—ay, two millions. Find them and place them in my hands before eight o'clock to-morrow night, and I will give each of you a million dollars."

There was no mistaking the earnestness of the man. Outwardly he was as cool as ever, but each of the detectives could see that a great excitement, almost too much for him to bear, was raging underneath the surface.

Nick looked at the inspector, and the inspector looked at Nick, and then Mr. Logan continued:

"It is a great deal to ask of you, I know. It is more than it seems possible to expect that you can do, but yet, I suppose it is possible to do it."

He paused in order to take two or three deep breaths, and then continued:

"You thought it strange, Carter, that I should have had the wisdom and the strength of purpose to keep out of this room until you had examined it, but I knew, instinctively, that those bonds were gone; I knew that if there was a man on earth who might recover them if they were gone, that man was you; I knew that in order to work at your best I must not put even a feather in your way.

"I am accustomed to self-repression. I can control myself, even under the great stress which has almost engulfed me to-day, and you will never know how great it has been. Even the delays which have occurred since this morning, have seemed to me useless, but I had made up my mind to let you work in your own way and to do everything you asked me to do.

"My offer to let you go into this room alone and spend the day here in my absence was, or should have been, proof of that. You do not realize how great a confidence that was for me to repose in any man. I would not extend that privilege to my son.

"But it was all with a sense of the realization of what had happened before my eyes.

"Now, gentlemen, I am face to face with a terrible calamity. I am like one who is standing in front of an onrushing locomotive, and I am paralyzed—without the power to move. If either of you or both of you have the power to lift me off the track, for God's sake do it!

"I can say no more. You have heard my offer. I will stand by it, and consider the service cheaply done, if you can perform it. If the sum is not enough, I will give more—only find those bonds and place them in my hands before eight o'clock to-morrow night.

"Come; let us return to the library and talk there. This room oppresses me."

He moved to the doorway, but at the threshold Nick Carter halted.

"Mr. Logan," he said, "I want you to do something."

"What is it?"

"Here are the three keys which fit the lock on this door. I want you to take them. Here they are."

"You are not going to abandon the case?" asked the capitalist, in affright.

"Not by any means. Now, if you and Inspector Martin will pass into the library and leave me here, I will consider it a favor."

"Why, we can do that, certainly."

"I wish you to lock this door after you and leave me here, locked in this strong room. I wish you and the inspector to seat yourselves in the library and to promise me that neither of you will leave it until I summon you. I want you to promise me that you will wait patiently until I do summon you; that you will not rap on the door of the strong room, in order to hasten my movements, no matter how long I may be in here. In short, I want you to wait patiently with the inspector, and with the three keys to this door in your hands, until I summon you to unlock it. Will you do that?"

"Why, of course I will do it."

"And will you keep him company, inspector?"

"Sure thing, Nick."

"We'll wait right here. We won't move out of this room until you rap to be let out," asserted Mr. Logan.

"Very good. Don't forget. Now, lock the door. I'll see you later."

The instant the door was locked, Nick Carter turned and hastened back to the stairs which descended to the vault door.

These stairs were of iron and were set in solid masonry—that is, in stone and cement; and Nick knew that beyond that veneering of stone and cement there was a thickness—he did not know how much—of chilled steel.

Nevertheless he began without delay to strain at the iron steps with his hands and arms, as if he expected easily to lift them from their places.

But although he tried each one separately, and many times, and from every conceivable position, not one of them would budge an inch.

"And yet," he remarked, presently desisting in his efforts for a moment, "it is certain that there is a way out of here, and that that method should be operated from this side as well as from the other. The man who came in here during the afternoon did not enter by the door; he did enter by the way of these stairs, and it is certain that he came somehow from beneath them."

The walls where the stairs descended were also of iron, forming one continuous sheet on each side of the steps, and when Nick had arrived at the determination that the stairs could not be made to move, he applied himself to the walls.

Nothing moved, or gave, or budged, and the detective paused again.

Suddenly he darted forward, and with one spring cleared the distance between him and the space at the bottom in front of the door of the vault.

Then, turning, he bent over, and, seizing the bottom step in his hand, he applied all his great strength to it, and lifted.

At first it appeared not to move at all, and yet there seemed to be an indication that it was not as solid as the steps were when taken separately, and he tried again.

This time there was a suggestion of success. The whole flight of steps seemed to give a little in his grasp.

He released his hold, straightened up and rested a moment, and then he bent to the task a second time.

This time he shut his jaws together, braced himself as well as he could, and then pulled.

From beyond the steps—somewhere in the depths of the wall behind them—there sounded a grating noise, and then a sharp crack, as if iron had been broken; and then the entire flight of eleven iron stairs rose in his hands so easily that a child might have lifted them; and in front of him, under the stairs, was revealed a narrow aperture, through which he easily passed, presently closing the strange exit again behind him.

He had gone from the strong room, and he had left no trace behind him of the way he took.

* * * * * * *

The great financier and the inspector were still discussing the robbery when there came a sharp rap against the panels of the door which communicated with the hallway.

"Who in the devil is that?" asked the capitalist angrily. "I don't want to be disturbed just now. It was at the hall door, wasn't it?"

"Yes; you had better see who it was," replied the inspector.

Mr. Logan rose and strode angrily to the door. Then he threw it open, but only to stagger back into the room again, with a cry of amazement and unbelief.

Nick Carter stood upon the threshold, facing him.

CHAPTER VIII.

SHOWING HOW THE THING WAS DONE.

Even the inspector, although in a measure prepared for what had happened, was astonished by the celerity with which the detective had acted in discovering a way out of the strong room other than by means of the door.

But he leaned back in his chair and said nothing, content to gaze upon the impromptu tableau which the sudden appearance of Nick Carter upon the scene had induced; and there was a quiet smile of expectancy upon his face, for he was sufficiently familiar with the methods of the little giant to understand that Nick's desire to have him there as a witness, and the utility of the delicate powder were only parts of a plan which he had already outlined in his mind, doubtless during his first conversation with the magnate.

"How, in the name of all that is wonderful, did you get out of that room?" gasped the man of millions, as soon as he could find speech.

"My dear sir," replied Nick, advancing into the room and dropping with a sigh into a convenient chair, "there is a quotation from Shakespeare which might supply an answer to that question. However, I will not trouble you with it, more than to distort it somewhat by saying that there are more things in the philosophy of some of your friends than you ever dreamed of when you had that strong room constructed."

"Explain what you mean by that, sir, if you please," pleaded Mr. Logan.

"Presently. All in good time. First, let me ask you how much time we have before you expect the gentlemen whom you were to receive to-night?"

Logan glanced at his watch.

"They should be here in about an hour, I think," he replied.

"Then," said Nick, "inasmuch as we are not sure that we will be entirely ready to receive them in an hour, I will ask you to ring for the butler and direct that your friends be told that you have not yet arrived home—that is, of course, in case we are not through by that time—and that they be taken into the drawing-room to await you there."

Mr. Logan raised no question regarding the expediency of this move, but did as he was requested to do without delay.

"Now," he said, when the butler had received his orders—"now, for mercy's sake, do not keep me in suspense any longer. Tell me how you escaped from that room while the only door to it is locked fast and I hold the keys to it. How did you do it?"

"I did it because there is another means than the door of entering and leaving the room. I have discovered that other way out, and I made use of it."

"But——"

"Wait, sir. First tell me who was your architect for that extension to your dwelling? Who drew the plans and engaged the workmen for it?"

"Philander Morrison. He is considered one of the best, if not the very best, architect in the city."

"Sure; and I think he has in this case proved his claim to the title. Did he engage the contractor to do the work, or did you?"

"He did. I made the contract directly with him—an unusual proceeding, I know, but that is the way it was done—and he did the rest."

"Who was that contractor? Or, who were the contractors?"

"Forbes & Robertson."

"Good. Now which one—Mr. Forbes or Mr. Robertson—gave this particular job his personal attention?"

"Why, both of them."

"Do you mean to say that both Mr. Forbes and Mr. Robertson attended in person to the building of that extension, to the construction of that vault, and to the work generally, until it was completed and ready to turn over to you?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Very good. Now I will ask the inspector to do me a favor;" and Nick turned to his friend.

"What do you want me to do for you now?" asked Inspector Martin.

"I think you know without my saying a word, don't you?" was Nick's reply.

"You want Mr. Philander Morrison, the architect, and also Messrs. Forbes and Robertson, brought here to this room, don't you?"

"Exactly that. If you will call up your office over the phone at your elbow, and direct that two of your men be sent for each of the three men I want here, and that they are instructed to bring them here if they have to use stretchers to do it, that will about fill the bill. Have them brought in through the side entrance and directly to this room."

"I'll have them here inside of an hour, all right, if they are in the city," said the inspector, with a smile.

"They are in the city, all of them," interjected the millionaire.

"How do you know that?" asked Nick.

"Because I had them all on the phone from my office to-day."

"To tell them what had happened here?" exclaimed Nick.

"By no means, sir. To tell them that I was thinking seriously of having some changes made in the present construction, and that I would like to consult with them to-morrow. You see, I wanted to have that débris cleared away before to-morrow night, and I thought I would be prepared for it."

"That's all right. Now, George, we will wait while you give your orders to your office."

They had not long to wait. The orders were presently delivered over the phone, and then the magnate turned expectantly again to the detective.

"Inspector," said Nick, "isn't it true that Philander Morrison, aside from being an architect, is also an inventor of considerable repute?"

"Yes. He owns a number of electrical inventions of his own."

"I thought so. Now, Mr. Logan."

"Yes, sir. I hope you have got around to me at last."

"I want you to be perfectly open and frank with me, as I will be with you, in the questions and answers to follow."

"Very well, sir."

"I will begin by telling you frankly that at the outset of this case I was of the opinion that you had robbed yourself."

"Good God! sir——"

"Hush! We have agreed to be perfectly frank. We must be so if we accomplish what you wish done. I began by suspecting that you were the robber; that your room was entered and wrecked at your own connivance. Such things have happened in my experience, and more than once, too."

"I cannot imagine it."

"You could if you were in my business. I asked you about the keys. You said that two of the three keys had never been used, but I wished to satisfy myself that they had not, and accordingly I got the keys in my possession. I did satisfy myself that two of them had not been used, at least not in a long time. A microscopic examination established that fact to my satisfaction.

"I then decided that either there was a fourth key to the room, or that the key you carried in your pocket had opened the door for the burglars, or—that there was another and a separate means of entrance and exit to and from that room. Taken altogether, the last seemed to me to be the most logical explanation."

"I should have called it the most illogical of all."

"Not if you had been in my place and I in yours, and you had suspected me of having had the vault built for the express purpose of robbing it at some future day."

"But, man, you suspected that I was a scoundrel."

"Surely I did. Don't lose your temper."

The magnate smiled grimly, and then said:

"Go ahead. I won't."

"I suspected that your willingness to leave me in that strong room all day alone, among your private papers and whatever else might be there, was a bluff which, as a character reader, you knew perfectly well I would not call; and I didn't call it."

"But I have explained——"

"Yes, since then. I know now, since you talked to us about the seriousness of the predicament in which you find yourself, that it was not a bluff; but all the same it put me on the right track, for I determined at that moment that I would go into that room without your knowledge."

"Ah! You did, eh?"

"Yes. When I left you downtown, after having secured the three keys, I went after the inspector and we came here together, and we entered that room and looked it over pretty thoroughly together."

"The devil you did!"

"We did. I wanted the inspector with me for obvious reasons. We understand each other perfectly, and we make a fairly good team when we work on a case side by side."

"I should say you did."

"Very well. We discovered, first, that it was not strange that your family had not been disturbed by the noise of any explosion during the night, for the reason that there had been no explosion sufficiently loud to have awakened a sleeper in this library, let alone the distant sleeping rooms of the house."

"But how——"

"The three safes and the vault were not drilled in the usual way, and there were no explosives used that were loud enough to have awakened a sleeping dog in the hallway of the house. What explosives were used were intended only to leave the evidence of their use behind them, in order to blind such inexperienced persons as Inspector Martin and myself. It was simply a case, on the part of the burglars, of vaulting ambition o'erleaping itself."

"I comprehend. How were the safes opened?"

"They were burned open."

"Burned open?"

"Yes; with electricity. About fourteen years ago a machine was invented by a Frenchman which produces a heat so intense that it eats through iron or steel with the same facility that the heat of a blowpipe would eat through cheese.

"You could write your name through eight-inch armor plate with this machine, almost as fast as you could move the instrument to form the letters."

"Incredible."

"Nevertheless true. The daily papers have had accounts of it. The only difficulty in its use consisted in the danger to the operator, who not only ran the risk of burning off his hand or his arm, or his leg, but of blinding himself, for the light from it is so intense that it would strike the sight out of any pair of eyes instantly."

"Well, sir?"

"It needed only a glance on the part of the inspector and myself to determine that this burglary had been committed by a person who had discovered a method of seeing without eyes to see with; by a person so incased in insulated garments that he could use the machine without especial danger, and by one who had devised some method of saving his eyes."

"And that is the way my safes and my vault were opened, eh?"

"Yes, that is the way. Your time lock is uninjured; it has simply been removed by burning the iron around it and then lifting it out. The bolts were removed in the same manner. The safes were opened in the same manner.

"I have told you that almost a glance satisfied us of this fact, but I was convinced that if you were the guilty party—that is, if it were done at your connivance, and if your suggestion that you leave me here alone were only a bluff, that you would visit this room again before the time for us to meet here at three o'clock.

"I had the keys to the room. If there was a fourth key it was likely that you knew it and owned it.

"When the inspector and I came to this room and entered the strong room, after we had made all the examination we cared to, I covered everything in that room with a fine powder which, if any person trod upon it, would betray the fact through the impression it would receive.

"You afterward complained of that powder as dust. Do you remember?"

"Perfectly."

"Well, that dust was the powder I had placed there to betray any person who should enter the room between eleven o'clock and three. Then, upon leaving the room, I fixed the keyhole so that if another key was thrust into it before I returned, I would know it.

"The point of the whole thing is, that when we came here at three o'clock, I knew that a fourth key had not been thrust into that keyhole; but when we entered the room, there were footprints on the powder, which assured me that some person had been inside the room since I had been there. So, you see, I knew there was another entrance."

CHAPTER IX.

WHO IS THE MAN?

After a short pause, the detective continued:

"I still suspected you—perhaps more strongly than ever.

"To add to that suspicion, when you were examining the smallest of the safes, you got down upon one knee in front of it exactly as the man who came there secretly had done, and you put your knee exactly on the same spot, moreover.

"I thought then that you were guilty, but a few moments later, when you were explaining what had been lost, and when you were describing what those promises were, your earnestness made me waver in my suspicions.

"Before you finished, I was convinced of your sincerity; but all the time I was determined to put you to another test.

"I knew that there was a secret entrance to the strong room. It was unlikely that such a thing could exist without your knowledge—and yet, illogical as it appears, such a condition came within the range of possibility, and as I say, I determined to put you to another test.

"The footprints left in the powder I had spread in the room, and which I was tracing while you waited in the doorway, established the fact that the secret en-

trance was in some way connected with the stairs which led down to the vault.

"I believed that I could find it without much delay, and so I directed that you lock me inside the room while I left the inspector with you in order that you would not leave the library while I was so engaged.

"The inspector knew perfectly well why I remained behind, and why I wished him to remain with you. If you had sought to leave this room during that time, he would have detained you. He was, however, I think, surprised that I appeared at the hall door as soon as I did.

"I found the secret entrance. I will show you later where it is, but it is sufficient for our purposes now to state that it goes under the stairs and thence by a narrow corridor to the outer wall of the house, where there is a stone in the foundation which works like a door, and which opens on the side street.

"I had only to be assured that no person was passing at the time, in order to step out unobserved, close it again, apply at the front door and ring the bell in the usual way; so you see, sir, that your strong room could at any time since you erected it have been entered from the street by any person who happened to know the secret.

"When I tapped against the hall door of this room, I heard the inspector ask you to ascertain who was there; and the final test to which I had determined to subject you, was the manner of your reception of me when you discovered that it was I.

"Need I say, sir, that I was instantly entirely convinced that you knew nothing of the secret entrance?"

"I hope not. I hope you are convinced."

"I am, sir, and also that we can find your bonds within the time you have specified."

"Heaven be praised! I hope so."

"Now, sir, I think you know who stole those bonds."

"By thunder, Carter! If you are going to——"

"Listen. I think you know who stole those bonds, or who directed that they should be stolen, and who now has them in his possession, but—I do not think you are aware that you know it."

"I will confess that that statement is quite beyond me," said Mr. Logan, with a look of wonder on his face.

"Think a moment. You never had a suspicion of that secret entrance to the strong room, did you?"

"Certainly not."

"Very well; there are those persons in the world, or at the least, two persons, who must know of its existence."

"Whom?"

"The architect, and both—or at least one of—the contractors. It could not have been constructed without their knowledge."

"True, by thunder!"

"That is why I have asked the inspector to have them brought here."

"I see."

"But that does not dispose of the idea that you know who stole the bonds."

"Why, one of those three."

"Not at all. In fact, I doubt if two of them even suspect that such a thing has happened, or ever would happen! I refer to the contractors."

"And the architect?"

"He is an inventor and an electrician as well as an architect. I shouldn't wonder if he has some guilty knowledge of the transaction. If he has, we will soon find it out when he is brought here."

"Perhaps he will refuse to come."

"Don't worry about that," interposed the inspector quietly. "He will be here all right."

"Now," continued Nick, "we must still return to the suggestion that you know who is behind all of this."

"I begin to see light," exclaimed the magnate. "Go ahead, Mr. Carter."

"Who, among the richest men of your associates, is the most unscrupulous? Who, among them, would have the greatest incentive, at this particular time, to deprive you of those bonds?

"You have offered two million dollars for their recovery; now who, among your acquaintances, and among the men who know the value of those bonds to you, would be willing to give five millions, or even ten millions, to get them out of your possession at this particular time? Do you know such a man?"

The magnate started to his feet, but Nick raised one hand to prevent him from speaking.

"Wait," he said. "Let me finish."

"Go on," said the magnate hoarsely.

"Who, when your strong room was contracted for, could have had the knowledge to provide him with the foresight to anticipate this moment? Who had the money, the audacity, and the power, the influence with courts and judges, with police commissioners and with all the powers in municipal authority, to dare to suggest such a thing to reputable men like this architect and these contractors—to pay them fortunes for their parts of the work, and to promise them immunity from punishment if by any chance their villainy should be discovered.

"Who could say to them: 'You will never be convicted. I will see to that. Or if you are, I will see to it that you are pardoned, and remember that you will be rich men. You will have one million, or two millions, or five millions each, as the case may be.'

"Who could and would say all that to these men, and so purchase their coöperation?

"Wait; there cannot be many such men. I doubt if among all your acquaintances there can be more than one. I know that rich men, dealing in mammoth enterprises, are unscrupulous in the means they employ to accomplish their ends, but this thing goes rather beyond the pale of precedent.

"Wait; I am not quite through. I want you to take into consideration every question I have propounded, to consider carefully, and then to answer carefully, for I see that you have already decided what name to utter."

"Why," exclaimed the banker, "there is only one such man in all the world! Only one."

"And his name? Utter it. Don't be afraid."

"Afraid? I should say not."

"Well, what is the name?"

"Daniel J. Dean."

"Very good. I suspected it. One of the richest men in New York, if not in all the world. Now, is he one of the men whom you expect to come here to-night?"

"No."

"To-morrow night?"

"Yes."

"And he is the man who will put the screws on if you do not produce those bonds at that meeting?"

"He is."

"Well, I prophesy that you will be able to produce them when they are called for. I will engage that he will deliver them to me, and that I will in turn hand them to you, before the time for that meeting. Now——"

They were interrupted by a rap at the door, and upon opening it, Inspector Martin's men, with the architect and the two contractors in charge, appeared in the doorway.

CHAPTER X.

NOT FOR ANOTHER MILLION.

"Step inside, gentlemen," said Nick, rising. "We were expecting you. Inspector, will you inform these men—if they have not already been told—that they are under arrest?"

"What does this mean? This is an outrage!" exclaimed Morrison, the architect; but Nick paid no attention to him. He stepped over and whispered something in the ear of the inspector, who at once turned to his own men, and said:

"Search your prisoners. Relieve them of everything they've got about them; papers and all. Especially weapons. We don't care to have any attempted suicides in this house."

Notwithstanding their pleading, their protestations of rage, and their anger, the three men were searched, after which all but one of the officers who came with them were dismissed into the hallway to wait until the proceedings were over.

"Now," said Nick, addressing them, "it is entirely unnecessary to tell you why you are here, and why you are under arrest. Bluff won't go with this outfit at all, and the only thing which can possibly stand in your favor at all, is a free and full confession from each of you."

"Confession of what? What in——" blurted out the architect.

"That will do, sir," said Nick. "I have already informed you that bluff will not go with us. Neither will the promise from your employer that you will not be prosecuted, for you will be, all of you, unless——"

He hesitated an instant, and then added slowly: "Neither will the money you have been paid for your work be of service to you, for you will be compelled to give it up.

"Now, Mr. Morrison," said the detective, turning and facing that gentleman directly, "where do you keep your insulated clothes, and the strange mask you use to shield your eyes when you open vaults and safes?"

The architect staggered back as if he had received a blow, stood thus for an instant, and then broke down and wept.

The contractors turned white to the lips, looked into each other's faces for an instant, and then sank into chairs which had been placed for their use.

The detective continued mercilessly:

"Shall I call to mind the transactions you have entered into with Daniel J. Dean, gentlemen? Shall I take you into the strong room, planned by you, Morrison, and erected by you two, Forbes and Robertson? Shall I show you the secret entrance under the vault stairs, and conduct you through it to the opening in the foundation of the house? Shall I show you, Morrison, how you came into that room this afternoon again?"

A groan from Morrison was the only answer.

"Would you all like to see the wonderful work that was done in that strong room last night by Mr. Morrison? You, Forbes and Robertson, do not know what he did, but I will tell you, so that you will know how he has betrayed you."

"No! Don't, for God's sake, don't!" cried Morrison.

"He entered that room last night," continued Nick pitilessly. "With his electrical boring and burning machine, he totally wrecked three safes and a vault. He wantonly destroyed two hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of property; and he stole——"

"No! no! no! For God's sake, stop!" besceeched Morrison. "I did not steal. I did all that you have said, but I did not steal."

"No," said Nick. "But you looked on complacently while your companions did the stealing. Shall I tell who those companions were, or will you?"

"I will tell, sir; everything, if you will have mercy."

"Mercy? Ask for that after we discover how thorough your confession is.

"Who was with you when you destroyed the safes and the vault? Who took the bonds, if you did not?"

"Mr. Dean and his private secretary, sir."

"Correct. Who came with you when you returned to that room this afternoon to take away a broken part of your electrical instrument which you had forgotten in your hurry when you were there before?"

"Nobody, sir. I came alone."

"Where are the stolen bonds now?"

"They are in my keeping, sir; but I did not take them. Mr. Dean insisted that I should take charge of them for him. He did not wish to keep them in his possession at all—at least, until after——"

"Until after to-morrow night, you would say?"

"Yes."

"I can understand that. So he left them with you, did he? Do you know their value?"

"No, sir. I don't even know what bonds they are. They are locked in a tin box and are in my safe at the Finance and Credit Company's safe-deposit vaults."

"Subject at any time, I suppose, to the demand of Mr. Dean?"

"To his demand through me; yes, sir."

"But not to his direct order?"

"No."

"Very good. I will ask you to go with Inspector Martin presently, and to deliver them to him. He will see that they are returned to their owner."

Nick turned then to the contractors, who had listened to all that had been said in a dazed sort of way, looking first at each other and then at the men who confronted them.

"Now, Forbes, and you, Robertson," said Nick coldly, "my business with you is very short. I require of each of you a full, written, signed, and sworn-to confession of everything connected with this affair, from the moment when you were first approached in regard to the construction of the secret entrance to the strong room of Mr. Logan's house.

"I want nothing left out of that confession," continued Nick sternly. "You must begin at the moment when the idea was suggested to you by the architect, and

you must trace out every detail that is connected with Mr. Dean.

"I need not tell you that I will know if you err in your relation of the story—if you leave anything unsaid, or if you dare to say anything that is not strictly true. I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Mr. Logan," said Nick, turning to the banker, "have you a stenographer in the house?"

"I have."

"Summon him, if you please."

"Now," the detective continued, when the stenographer appeared, "I will take you, one by one, into the strong room with me, so that you will each tell your story separately. You will understand, therefore, how necessary it is that each of you tells only the truth.

"Morrison," said the detective, turning to the architect, "you will come first, if you please, for I want you to go to the safe-deposit vaults with the inspector at once."

"But the place is closed now. We cannot get into it."

"Tut, man! The inspector will find a way to get at the safes. The outer door has no time lock upon it, as I happen to know. Come."

And so, one by one, the three men were taken into the adjoining room where they made their confessions to the stenographer, after which they were written out on the typewriter, and so finally signed and sworn to by each guilty man.

While all this was under accomplishment, Jared Logan, happy now that his bonds were again in sight—now that he knew positively that they would be in his possession before half past eight the succeeding night—excused himself and went to the drawing-room of the great mansion, where the gentlemen, whom he had expected to meet that evening, were awaiting him with impatience.

Whatever that meeting was, its business was concluded in short order, for, by the time the confessions were completed and sworn to, he was back again.

When all the preliminaries were completed, Nick spoke again:

"Morrison," he said, "you will go with the inspector, as I have directed. He will keep you in custody until the morning of the day after to-morrow, when, if Mr. Logan makes no charge against you, you will be set free.

"You and your associates, Forbes and Robertson," said the detective, looking at the two contractors, "will be asked to disgorge enough of your ill-gotten gains to replace the property in the strong room in the condition it was before you attacked it. Other than that, I think your absence from the city of New York will be all that the inspector will ask of you, or all that Mr. Logan will require, for the reason that he prefers to have this matter kept silent, if possible.

"Forbes, and you, Robertson, will be taken by the men who conducted you here to the headquarters of police, where you will be detained until the morning of the day after to-morrow.

"The same conditions which I have applied to Morrison, apply to each of you. Of course, it is no affair of mine if Mr. Dean should require you to give up some of the wealth he has given you. I could force him to let you keep it, but, of course, I will not do so. My advice to you is to get out of the city and out of the country as soon as you can, and to forget, if you can, all that has happened here.

"Mr. Logan's business requires that as little as possible of this affair should become known, and, if any of it is known, you will go to Sing Sing, every one of you.

"This is all. You may go now."

* * * * * * *

The magnate and the detective were alone together. The others had gone.

"Mr. Carter," said the capitalist, "I have never supposed it possible for a man to be as happy as you have made me this night. At the very moment of utter despair, every cloud is dispelled, and I find myself a hundred times better off than if my vault had not been entered and my bonds had not been stolen."

"How is that?" asked Nick.

"Because now I can force the only man I feared—Dean—to do as I have long wished him to do. I wished to be fair to the small investors, but he has been determined to rob them, from the first. Now, I can compel him to play fair."

"Then it is a good thing all around, is it not?"

"You bet it is. I shall not forget my promise to you and to the inspector. The checks will be ready for you at ten o'clock in the morning."

"Thank you, sir."

"Now, is there anything more that I can do for you?"

"Yes, one thing."

"What is it?"

"I would like to be present when you produce those bonds at the meeting, to-morrow night, for, as I understand it, you do not intend, as things have turned out, to say anything about this matter, even to Dean."

"Most certainly I do not."

"You merely intend to produce the bonds at the proper time."

"Exactly that."

"I would like to see old Dean's face when you do it."

"You shall."

"But how?"

"It is part of my duty, in case the transaction goes through, as I have wished it to do, and it will go through now, to name another director. I shall make you a present of some of those bonds, and also of some of the stock, when it is issued, and you shall be present at the meeting, as that director."

"Good! Then I will see old Dean's face."

"That you shall."

* * * * * * *

The strong room had been cleared of the débris.

New safes, exactly like the ones that had been destroyed, had been introduced into the room, and the entrance to the vault, being out of sight, gave no indication of the havoc that had been wrought there so recently.

The long table through the center of the room was surrounded by the richest men of the city of New York.

At the head of the table, Jared Logan was seated, and at the opposite end sat Daniel J. Dean.

Nick Carter was there, too, sitting at Mr. Logan's right hand.

Then the crucial moment arrived.

Mr. Dean, at the lower end of the table, rose in his place, and, in a voice that was like the clink of ice in a goblet, said:

"Gentlemen, we seem to have agreed to everything, but I have yet a word to say. I know that I shall surprise many of you, and that I shall offend Logan in what I am about to state, but I feel that I have a duty to perform."

He paused an instant as if to emphasize what he was saying, and then continued:

"I have reason to believe that Logan has not acted square with us. I have reason to believe that the bonds which we require for this arrangement are not now in his possession.

"How I know that, or what reason I may have for making this statement, does not matter. I do make it, and I desire that he be required forthwith to produce those bonds, or to explain why he does not do so."

Quiet glances were exchanged between the men around the table, as if some of them had received an inkling of what position Dean intended to take, and, while they were exchanging their knowing looks, Jared Logan pulled open the door of the smallest safe, which stood within reach of his hand.

From it he took a bundle from which he quickly removed the covers.

"I am delighted," he said slowly, "to be in a position to disappoint Dan Dean. Here are the bonds, gentlemen. Shall we proceed?"

Daniel Dean started to his feet with a cry of amazement. He stretched forth one hand as if to seize the bonds to inspect them, but he suddenly clutched at his breast, and then, with a moan, sank back into his chair, unconscious.

He had fainted.

And Nick Carter leaned over the table and whispered to Mr. Logan:

"I wouldn't have missed it for another million."

THE END.

"Birds of Prey; or, A Battle With Human Vultures," is the title of the story that will be found in the next issue of this weekly, No. 79, out March 14th, and it is well named, for it tells of one of the worst gangs of criminals that the great detective and his assistants had ever been called upon to subdue. Do not fail to read this story if you want to be held spellbound from the beginning to the end; and you will not forget it quickly, either.

MONKEYS' HANDS.

There is so much variety in the hands of monkeys that a comparison of them with those of man cannot very easily be made; but this comparison may be made with the higher apes, such as the gorilla and chimpanzee, which approach nearest in their structure to ourselves. In the gorilla, the thumb is short, and does not reach much beyond the bottom of the first joint of the forefinger. It is very restricted in its movements, and the animal can neither twiddle its thumbs nor turn them around till the tips describe a circle. The web between the fingers reaches to the beginning of the second joint; the fingers taper to the tips; and there is a callosity, or pad, on the knuckles on which the animal rests when walking on all fours. In man, the thumb reaches to the top of the first joint of the forefinger. Man can "twiddle" his thumb, so that the tip will describe a circle; and he can touch the tips of all his fingers with it; the web between the fingers does not extend beyond the base of the first joint; and there are no pads on the knuckles. The bones in the hand of man, and in that of the gorilla, are the same in number and in general form. But the thumb of the monkey have no separate flexor or bending muscle, as those of men have. This is why a monkey always bends his thumbs with his fingers, and never puts his thumb round an object which he grasps, but always keeps it on the same side as his fingers.

The Chief Inspector's Best Man.

By ALDEN F. BRADSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

THE MORNING'S NEWS.

"If you please, sir, I wish to find Chief Inspector Watts."

"I am Chief Inspector Watts, young man."

And the efficient head and front of the Boston detective service, the inspector of police, gravely turned and bent his searching gaze upon the face of his caller.

The caller saw before him an imposing figure, combining portliness, dignity, and physical strength; a refined, intelligent face, forceful and grave, with keen and penetrating blue eyes; the bearing of a gentleman and a man calmly conscious of his great power.

The visitor was an aristocratic youth of nineteen or twenty years, tastefully clad, and, by his pale face and tearful eyes, evidently seriously distressed.

"Thank Heaven I find you, sir," he cried, in tremulous tones; "I feared I was too early."

It then was about eight o'clock, on a clear, cool morning in the late fall, and the scene was the clerk's office in that part of the headquarters building occupied by the rooms of the inspectors of police.

Quick to read men's faces, something in that of his visitor's led Chief Inspector Watts to conduct him through the adjoining corridor and into his private office.

This is a large, square room, well lighted by two windows fronting on Pemberton Square.

Carpet and rugs cover the floor. Nearly in the middle of the room is a large roll-top desk, on which the accumulation of letters, documents, and papers indicates the enormous detail involved in the work of this busy chief.

Fronting the desk is a tall cabinet, containing a classified history of thousands of noted crime cases, the archives, as it were, of vice and crime.

Against the inner wall and opposite the windows is a similar cabinet. It is lettered in gilt, "Bertillon System of Measurement and Photographs." It has numerous small drawers. These contain the descriptive features of a criminal, through a process of measurement, with descriptive marks. It makes a picture which physical dissolution only can entirely destroy.

Such was the general appearance of the chief's private office, into which he had led young Ralph Barnard.

"Well, sir, having found me, what do you want?" he asked, with a commanding air habitual to him, and irresistibly impressive.

"Will you come out to my home at once, sir?"

"What is wrong at your home?"

"A crime has been committed! My father has been murdered!"

"Murdered!"

Chief Watts echoed the startling word without a change in countenance or manner. He is not a man to betray his feelings, however disturbed or excited. Likewise disregarding the stranger's emotion, he asked quietly:

"What's your name, young man?"

"Ralph Barnard."

"Who is your father?"

"Mr. Joseph Barnard."

"Not the attorney?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it possible—murdered! How did you know that?"

"The evidence speaks for itself," Ralph replied chokingly. "We found his body this morning on the——"

"Wait! I will go with you. I will hear the particulars on the way. We will take an automobile at once! There is one at the door."

Quickly slipping into a light topcoat, Chief Inspector Watts briskly led young Barnard through the corridor and back to the clerk's office.

There was just the shadow of a change now observable in this noted chief and his bearing—a more decisive step, a growing fire in the depths of his keen eyes, and a closer compression of his firm lips. It was as if the bare possibility of the startling crime reported had suddenly spurred to action the indomitable will and subtle forces which have earned him worthy distinction among the ablest men of his vocation.

"Garrett, is Inspector Keene about here this morning?" he demanded briskly, of a young clerk at the desk.

"I think so, chief!" was the quick reply. "I think he's in the men's room."

"Send him here!"

"I will take one of my detectives along with me," added the chief, as the clerk sped through the corridor to a rear room allotted for general use to the subordinate inspectors. "Though the case proves to be even as serious as your disclosure implies, I am not sure I can give it my entire attention. Here is Detective Keene, now."

"They were joined, as he spoke, by a young man in the twenties, as clean cut of features as an intaglio, yet with a countenance as frank, fresh, and prepossessing as can be imagined. Though of slight build and quite tall, his figure combined suppleness and grace with the strength of an athlete; while his every motion, the fire of his clear, blue eyes, the ring of his pleasant voice, were at once suggestive of a lively, energetic spirit, well held in check by a discriminating mind.

"Good morning, chief!" he at once said courteously.

"Good morning, Keene! I want you to go with me. Come, young man!"

And Chief Inspector Watts, closely followed by the others, briskly ascended the short stairs leading up from the basement offices, and out into the sunshine of Pemberton Square.

A big automobile belonging to the police department stood at the curbing.

"Get in, Mr. Barnard," commanded the chief; then, aside to the young detective at his elbow: "He reports that his father, Joseph Barnard, the lawyer, has been murdered. I'm very busy just now, and may assign the investigation to you."

"Very well, chief!" Detective Keene quickly nodded. "I will do my best, yet would like the benefit of your discernment and experienc if the case proves blind."

"Surely, Shed! And I will look it over with you to start with. Get in. What's your street and number, Mr. Barnard?"

"I live in Riverlawn Park, sir, on the Charles. The house is the only one on the right, except that of Mr. Slocum, the banker. If you drive out by the way of the——"

"Sure, chief, I know the place!" put in the chauffeur. "It's Lawyer Barnard's."

"Good for you, Patsey! Get out there lively."

And Chief Inspector Watts entered the car, banging the door behind him, and took the seat opposite his two companions.

That he knew Lawyer Barnard well partly accounts for the chief's immediate and personal action in the matter. He knew him as a member of the Suffolk bar, a man of eminence in his profession, and of wealth and influence in the community. That he had made an enemy sufficiently vengeful to have taken his life seemed hardly credible.

"Now, young man, let's have the whole story," Chief Watts commanded sharply, as the car whirled away through Pemberton Square and under the frowning walls of the imposing new courthouse. "What do you know of the circumstances?"

"I know only that my father is dead, sir; that we found his body on the library floor this morning. He had been shot through the heart, and the appearances of the room indicate——"

"I'll judge of the appearances myself, if you please! At what time was the body found?"

"About seven o'clock."

"By whom?"

"One of the servant girls."

"Under what circumstances?"

"She discovered that the gas was still burning in the library, and opened the door to learn why it had been left so."

"If the door was closed, how did she learn that the gas had not been extinguished?"

"She had been out-of-doors, she states, and saw the reflection of the light on the drawn curtains of the library windows."

"Ah, I see!"

"She is a trustworthy girl, sir!"

"I didn't imply the contrary!" said Chief Inspector Watts shortly. "Was your father at home all of last evening?"

"I think so, sir."

"Don't you know?"

"Not positively, sir. The servants were both out until after eleven o'clock. Aside from my father, our family consists only of my brother Frank, my Cousin Sybil Howard, and myself. We three were at a local concert, and did not return home until late, about eleven, I think."

"Then, so far as you know, your father was alone in the house most of the evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did none of you see or speak with him on returning home?"

"No, sir, none of us. My Cousin Sybil was escorted home by George Slocum, the son of the banker, and she states that she went right to bed. Frank and I came in a little later, and also retired. I observed then that a light was burning in the library; but that was nothing unusual, as my father frequently worked there until late at night."

"Do any of you know if he had had callers, or expected any?"

"No, sir; he said nothing to that effect while at dinner."

"At about what hour was your father left alone in the house?"

"About half past seven, sir. I saw and spoke with him just before starting for the concert."

"Were you the last to leave the house?"

"Yes, sir; though I left in company with my brother Frank and Cousin Sybil."

"Is the latter a young lady?"

"She is twenty, sir, and has lived with us since childhood."

"Parents dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where was your father and what was he doing, when you last saw him?"

"He sat in the library. He appeared to be engaged over some documents and papers on the table at which he was seated."

"Did you say he was accustomed to working there evenings?"

"Yes, sir. In fact, what we call the library is rather a room which he used for a home office. He frequently had clients call at the house, sir. To me there seems to be but one solution of the awful tragedy," added Ralph, in tones shaken with filial grief. "Some person must have entered the house after our departure and shot my father dead. The cowardly deed could not possibly have been committed after our return."

"You imply that the report of the weapon would have been heard?"

"Precisely, sir! A revolver could not have been discharged unheard during our presence in the house."

To this the chief made no reply. The remark was reasonable. And though not much given to anticipating difficulties, he knew that the case already appeared involved in mystery.

The younger detective, Sheridan Keene, sat a silent listener to the chief's fusillade of questions, and young Barnard's ready answers. He lost the significance of none, and fully appreciated Chief Watt's ability to cover all the ground.

Between these two men existed a rather stronger affection than that of mere professional esteem. The one owed to the other some of the noteworthy success which was already winning him distinction in his vocation; and, with his habitually keen discernment, Chief Watts very soon had discovered that, in the young man now some months his subordinate, he had secured an officer of more than ordinary acumen and acquirements.

Nor were these attributes of Keene the results of accidents. In early life he had determined the calling he would adopt when a man, and had trained himself accordingly.

Naturally endowed with an observing eye, an analytical mind, and a faculty quick to detect and adjust obscure relations, he further had prepared himself for the aim in view by tireless study, not only of the languages, chemistry, chirography, and the practical methods of the most successful votaries of the detective art; but also Lavater's science of physiognomy, until the human face had become to him a more reliable index of character than can, without some knowledge of the science, even be imagined.

It was not strange, therefore, that Chief Watts had observed in him a young officer of unusual promise; and found in him one to whose cleverness and judgment he could occasionally appeal. And it had been noticed of late that some of the most mysterious cases coming under the investigation of the inspectors of police had been assigned by him to young Detective Keene.

And the Barnard affair proved to be one of this nature.

"Did you at once come in search of me on discovering the fatality?" the chief demanded, after quite a period of silent consideration.

"Very soon after, sir," Ralph explained. "I first sent for our family physician, Doctor Cushman."

"Anything more?"

"I sent a messenger to notify our local police captain, sir."

"His name is Mason, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had he reached your home when you left?"

"No, sir."

"I hope he may be delayed till after my arrival. I want no person disturbing things."

"I left instructions that nothing should be disturbed till you came!" Ralph eagerly exclaimed.

"Ah, indeed! That was very thoughtful," nodded the chief, with a curious lighting of his austere eyes.

Then he leaned forward and called to the chauffeur.

"Hit it up a little. What's that ahead of us, a taxi?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply.

They already were nearing Riverlawn Park. A suspicion flashed to the chief's mind. This cab might contain the head of the local police, Captain Mason, whose investigation of the case he preferred to anticipate. It was throwing up a great cloud of dust behind, some of which found its way to the chief's throat and choked him. He coughed, and shouted violently:

"Can't you overtake and pass it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then do so!" commanded Chief Watts sternly.

They had left the heart of the city far behind, and had reached those distant outskirts where the imposing dwellings are isolated, with broad and secluded grounds between.

Here a belt of woodland bordered the river, the waters of which could be seen glistening in the distance, and on the bank of which stood the palatial dwellings of both Philip Slocum, the millionaire banker, and of Lawyer Joseph Barnard, the victim of the previous night's fatality.

The approaching motors now swung round a curve of the shadowy road, and immediately beyond was the entrance to the Barnard estate.

In a moment both motors were approaching the broad gateway.

But the car containing Chief Inspector Watts was now in advance.

CHAPTER II.

STARTLING EVIDENCE.

Near the gateway was quite a gathering of morbidly curious people, drawn there by the startling news which now had begun to spread. They were prevented from entering the grounds by a local police officer stationed at the gate, and their vacillating interest quickly turned toward the two motors and the persons who sprang from the first to arrive.

"That's Watts! That's the chief inspector!" excitedly whispered one knowing fellow to a stranger at his elbow.

"Is it?"

"Sure thing! You can gamble I know him! And you don't want to cut loose in the wrong direction and have him looking for you!" grinned this informant significantly. "It's a good, safe bet that he'll land you!"

"Who's the man with the alpine hat and the sharp eyes?"

"I'm not sure, but I think that is Detective Keene."

"He's a mighty shrewd-looking duck!"

"Humph! Don't you make any mistake about that, neighbor!"

Naturally none of the trite encomiums reached the ears of the arriving officers, and Chief Inspector Watts, on springing down from his car, swung round and flashed a quick glance at the occupant of the taxicab. He rarely shoots very wide of the mark—the man at that moment alighting, a large, solid man in the uniform of a police captain, was the person the chief had expected.

Whatever he may have thought about the car which had passed him, he was greeted with a suavity not to be resisted.

"Oh, good morning, Captain Mason!" said the chief cordially. "Glad to see you! Shake hands with Inspector Keene. Sorry to hear such bad news from out here."

"It reached you quite quickly, Chief Watts," was the reply, with a curious smile, as Captain Mason responded to the greeting and introduction.

"Yes," quietly assented the chief. "Young Barnard reported the case to me at once. His information indicates a rather mysterious crime, and I decided to run out here in person.

"Glad you are here," he added. "Suppose we look over the evidence together."

"With pleasure, of course!" was Captain Mason's rather anomalous answer, in the light of the very serious nature of their mission.

The crowd stared after the several men, who, accompanied by Ralph Barnard, now entered the gate. The patrolman on sentry duty touched his helmet and said modestly:

"Good morning, chief."

"Good morning, officer," said Chief Watts, with grave, effective austerity, which instantly commands obedience and respect.

"This way, gentlemen," said Ralph soberly.

The house stood a hundred yards from the street. It was surrounded by a great park of elms and beeches, with part of the woodland on the north. On all sides was the evidence of wealth and refinement, and the dwelling itself was a fine old colonial structure of wood, with Corinthian columns and broad verandas.

The detectives were met at the door, and ushered into the dim and sumptuous hall, by Ralph's brother Frank, and by Doctor Cushman.

But there was no sign of the one and only woman of the family, the niece of the dead man—the girl named Sybil Howard.

"What has been done here?" asked Chief Watts, immediately after introductions.

"But little, sir," the physician replied. "I have merely viewed the body. We have been waiting your arrival."

"Has anything been disturbed?"

"Nothing at all, sir."

"Very good!" the chief said approvingly, laying off his topcoat. "Show me to the library. None but you, doctor, and these officers may accompany me."

With which peremptory directions the four men approached the library till they stood on the threshold of the fatal room, the chief and Sheridan Keene in advance.

"Wait here!" commanded the former, with a sudden slight change of voice.

A shocking and gruesome scene had met their sober gaze.

The curtains at the windows still were drawn. The silent room was dim. It was like an appalling picture done in half tone.

In one corner stood a small desk, closed and locked. A bookcase, with glass doors, occupied one side of the room. Against the wall between the two windows was a heavy mahogany table, square, the broad swinging leaf of which was turned down. The table had no cloth upon it, but was covered by endless papers, documents and writing materials. With these was a box of loose tobacco, some of which had been spilled, and left carelessly lying amid the disordered papers.

So much for the table.

The floor had no carpet, but was covered with a large square rug. On this was scattered many documents and papers, which evidently had fallen from the table. Some of these were considerably burned and blackened. Near by lay a large French clay pipe, the stem of which was broken. And quite close to the door lay an ominous-looking revolver, evidently that with which the crime had been committed.

It had been necessary to present these details, yet the first object to claim the gaze of all was the victim of the dreadful tragedy.

There upon the rug, face down, and some two or three feet from the table, with arms outstretched and his life blood in a red pool under and about him, lay all that was mortal of the noted lawyer, Joseph Barnard, cold and still in death.

"Raise those curtains, Tom!" commanded the chief shortly.

Detective Keene tiptoed across the room and obeyed. A flood of clear daylight accentuated the dismal details.

"Now, doctor, you first," said the chief, closing the library door. "How long has this man been dead?"

There was something horribly businesslike in his way, and in the celerity with which he proceeded; but thus only can justice be rendered, and Chief Inspector Watts was the man of all men for such an occasion as this.

Doctor Cushman came forward and bent above the motionless figure on the floor.

"Not far from ten hours, I should say," he presently replied. "Surely since last evening."

"Can you examine the wound?"

"By turning the body over."

"Do so! Now, what do you find?"

"The bullet entered just below the breast bone, and passed through the heart. The wound was instantly fatal, sir."

"Could it have been self-inflicted?"

The physician said decidedly:

"No, sir!"

"Explain why."

"The weapon could not have been held and fired to have caused such a wound, without smoking if not burning the shirt front."

"Are there no indications of that?"

"None whatever. Furthermore, it would have been wholly unnatural to so have held a weapon."

"You think, then, that the man was shot by some other person?"

"I certainly do!"

"We will assume that to be the fact, doctor. Where, then, judging from the direction taken by the ball and the position in which the body was discovered, was the assassin probably standing when the shot was fired?"

Doctor Cushman drew a pliable rubber probe from his pocket, and for several minutes continued his operations over the dead man. Presently he looked up and gravely answered:

"I should say about where you are standing, Chief Watts."

"Certainly between Lawyer Barnard and the library door?"

"I would stake my reputation upon that."

"Do you find any indications of a struggle or conflict prior to the firing of the shot?'

"I find a bruise on the back of the fingers of the right hand, and an abrasion over the knuckles. Moreover, the stone is missing from a gold ring on the lawyer's finger!"

"Here, chief, is the stone!"

The interruption came from Detective Keene, whose intent gaze had lost none of the details of the scene. He stepped forward while speaking, and picked up from the rug beneath the table a large diamond, the glitter of which had caught his eye.

Chief Inspector Watts took the stone between his thumb and finger, and, bending above the ghastly form on the floor, applied the jewel to the damaged setting.

"It fits the ring exactly!" he said quietly. "This evidently was broken by a violent blow."

"A blow given his assailant, of course!" cried Captain Mason, with some excitement.

"Very possibly."

"Positively, I should say, chief! Surely the damaged ring and the bruised knuckles are evidence that he struck his assailant before the shot was fired."

"I think so, too," gravely observed the physician.

But Chief Watts, calm and imposing in his austere gravity, expressed no further opinion.

"Do you find any other evidence on the body, doctor?" he demanded.

"I do not, sir. Perhaps the autopsy of the medical examiner will reveal something more."

"I will excuse you, then, if you have other engagements?"

"I am in no haste, sir."

And the physician remained.

The chief stooped and took up the broken pipe from the floor.

"Was Barnard addicted to smoking, doctor, do you know?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. He was an inveterate smoker."

"I find that he had freshly filled his pipe, but evidently was assaulted before he had time to light it, since none of the tobacco is burned."

"He must have had it in his left hand, and dropped it when shot!" Captain Mason eagerly suggested.

"Very likely."

"These papers scattered over the floor further indicate a struggle, in which they must have been swept from the table," added Mason.

"Do you observe that some of them are partly burned, Inspector Watts?" demanded the physician.

"Yes."

"How do you account for that, sir?"

The chief drew himself up and in a curiously moderate way expressed an opinion.

"I account for it thus, if this be indeed a case of murder," he said gravely: "With a view to covering his crime the assassin turned incendiary also. He set fire to the papers, which appear to be deeds, writs, and documents of some kind; and yonder on the floor is the burned match which he used. That this attempt was made in great haste and excitement, however, there can be no doubt; for the work was ineffectively done, and the fire burned itself out in the papers only."

"The rug is slightly burned."

"So I see."

"I will wager that is the solution, chief!" exclaimed the physician admiringly. "Some man certainly was here last evening, and departed in great haste after having committed the crime—of that there can no doubt!"

"But the question still remains to be answered—who was the man?"

"Or woman!" said Sheridan Keene to himself.

"What are the habits of the two sons of the lawyer? Do you know, doctor?" the chief next inquired.

"Their habits are exemplary!" was the quick reply. "Ralph is employed in his father's law office. Frank is still in college. I would as quickly suspect one of my own blood as either of the Barnard boys!"

"I am told by one of them that, so far as he knows, his father expected to be at home alone all of last evening."

"So I understand, sir. But that he was not alone here is now lamentably apparent."

Like one moved by a sudden impulse, the chief now crossed the room and laid his hand on Detective Keene's shoulder.

"A word with you, Keene," he said softly. "I want you, while I am examining these documents on the floor and table, which may give some hint concerning the visitor who may have been expected here last night, to take a turn outside, with an eye for any suspicious circumstances. Examine the library windows, and the ground beneath them, as well as any other points at which an entrance may have been secretly effected. If you find anything out of the way, report it to me later."

"I will investigate at once," whispered Sheridan. "And I'll see you before you leave for town."

"Do so!" nodded the chief approvingly.

Then he turned back to the table and the disordered documents thereupon; while Detective Keene slipped quietly from the room, closing the door after him.

CHAPTER III.

THE EAVESDROPPER.

There was a special reason why Detective Keene closed the library door behind him—an occasion observed only by himself.

The library opened into a long hall. On the opposite side were the parlors, a large double room divided by a rich portière. The light from one of the windows of the rear parlor shone into the hall through the rear parlor door, and toward the door of the library. Before leaving the library Detective Keene noticed that though the library door was closed, the reflection of the outer light could be seen on the polished threshold beneath it, a mere thread of light close to the floor. With a sudden startling suspicion as he crossed the library to emerge, Keene, by mere chance, detected a swift change in the thread of light.

It suddenly brightened. It was as if his approaching step had been heard, and as if some startled person, who stood partly in the rays from the rear parlor, had hurriedly moved away.

"An eavesdropper!" instantly decided Keene, who never lost the significance of such a circumstance. "The mystery widens!"

Yet he made no disclosure.

If the solution of this mysterious affair was to devolve upon him, with the assistance of Chief Inspector Watts, there would come a better time for making a report to his superior than in the presence of Police Captain Mason, whose officious interest might yet in some way embarrass them. The long hall was vacant when Detective Keene emerged. Not a sign of the spy. Whoever he was, he had vanished as if into thin air.

Now, feeling that he himself might be watched, he made no betrayal of his suspicious discovery. Approaching the front door, which was a screen door, the main one standing open, he encountered a girl just entering, evidently one of the servants.

"Good morning," he said quietly.

"Good morning, sir," said the girl, with a slight curtsy. "I presume Ralph and his brother are engaged just now."

"Yes, sir; they are. They are in Mr. Ralph's room upstairs, sir; writing letters telling friends of the sad death, sir. Do you want them?"

"Oh, no," said Sheridan indifferently. "I'm going presently."

"Yes, sir."

And the servant, removing her hat as she went, ascended the hall stairs.

Sheridan decided that the eavesdropper was neither of the young men. But the identity of the spy was important. He resolved to meet cunning with cunning.

Apparently without special aim, he passed out-of-doors and sauntered round the veranda, on which the sound of his feet could be heard plainly from within.

At the end of five minutes, he tiptoed back to the front door, hoping that his absence would encourage the spy to return. His hope was rewarded, but his success only partial for the moment. For the sun had cast his shadow upon the screen door before he could reach it and look within.

But he caught, like a flash of light, the flutter of white skirts vanishing into the rear parlor. The spy had again retreated from the library door.

"A woman!" muttered Sheridan, with a thrill of surprise. "And I reckon I now can corner her!"

He entered the hall again, moving quietly but quickly, and then slipped into the main parlor and toward the portière partly concealing the rear room. As he suspected would be the case, the spy was approaching from the opposite direction, apparently anxious to evade observation.

But they met on the very threshold between the two rooms.

"Oh, mercy! how you startled me!"

The exclamation, little more than a quick, sharp whisper, broke involuntarily from the woman.

Yet she was young, not more than twenty; and Keene, though his nerves were usually as flexible as steel, fairly recoiled for an instant. For never in his life had he looked on such a startling type of feminine beauty.

She was perfectly formed, and tastefully clad in a dark lace morning dress, which accentuated her clear pink-and-white complexion; while her regular features, her pretty mouth, her large, deep-blue eyes and wealth of fleecy auburn hair, combined to present a countenance viewed but once in a lifetime.

"Startled you, eh!" gasped Keene, as he caught his breath, and his self-possession as well.

"Greatly, sir!"

And a quick smile, manifestly forced, swept to the girl's face. But she, too, had caught herself. Keene decided, and was aiming to avert possible suspicion.

"Sorry, I'm sure," said he. "Are you one of the servants?"

"No, sir, I am not! Do I look like a servant, sir?"

"Well, frankly, you do not."

"Nor am I," was the haughty rejoinder. "I am Sybil Howard, one of the family here."

"And my name is Keene," said Sheridan shortly. "I'm a detective, and engaged in looking into this affair."

The light in Sybil's searching eyes intensified. Not for an instant as yet had they left those of the detective, at whose frank and rather curt avowal she fell to trembling visibly, with breast heaving, despite her efforts to conceal her perturbation.

"A detective!" she echoed faintly.

"Precisely," nodded Keene, who was steadily taking her measure. "But I am striving only to serve justice, Miss Howard, and the innocent need never fear."

"No, surely not!" assented Sybil, and her smile returned. "If you please I will pass through the parlor and go upstairs to my room."

The request was necessary, for Keene was purposely remaining directly in front of her.

"Before you go, Miss Howard, tell me what you were doing out yonder!" he said quietly, with a toss of his head toward the hall.

Again she shrank—and again caught herself by sheer force of will. But now all the color was gone from her

lovely cheeks, and only the forceful pressure of her bloodless lips prevented their quivering.

"Out where?" she equivocated, in a short, sharp whisper.

"Out in the hall."

"I wasn't doing anything out in the hall!"

"Oh, yes, you were!" Keene firmly persisted. "Tell me what—and for what reason!"

"How dare you speak so to me! You are impertinent! I am not compelled to answer you!" protested Sybil, with eyes betraying the possession of a latent power that surprised even her opposer.

"Pardon, but you may be compelled, Miss Howard," said Keene gently.

"Let me pass!"

"Not yet, please."

"You are insolent! You are——"

"I am firm, rather!" said Keene, more sternly. "I am a detective, here upon a serious duty, and I mean what I say. Tell me what you were doing in the hall!"

"I am going to my room, sir!"

With sudden impulsive desperation she now made an effort to pass him, but the detective seized either of her fair wrists and gently, yet firmly, detained her. He found that her pulse was beating furiously, which betrayed at once the wild riot of her heart.

"Listen to me, Miss Howard!" he now commanded, in a low, severe way, which few would care to have disregarded. "I want an answer to my question. Either that, or it may be necessary for me to arrest you."

She did not cry out at this threat. The will of the girl seemed superior even to her present desperate situation. But the look on her hueless face became that of superlative hate and resentment.

She drew back a little, sweeping aside her skirts with her dainty foot, and without further effort to release herself from the hands of the detective she said, with caustic bitterness, meeting him eye to eye:

"I cannot hope to cope with you, sir, when it comes to a trial of brute strength! You are a very muscular man! But I am your superior in all other worthy attributes, I will wager!"

"Possibly!" said Keene dryly. "Even your——"

"Oh, I don't fear that you will arrest me!" interrupted Sybil, with her agitation now displaced by an icy mingling of composure and contempt. "There will be no need of that. Release me, if you please! I will answer your question."

"Do so," said Keene, instantly releasing her hands.

And had the situation been less serious, and his suspicions less pronounced, he could have admired her for her rare womanly power and superb beauty.

"Pardon—what was the question?" she now demanded, with a sneer.

"I asked what you were doing in the hall, Miss Howard."

"I was listening at the library door!"

"Playing the eavesdropper?"

"Precisely!"

"With what object?"

"Your question has become two questions, sir!"

"Answer question number two, then!" cried Keene, with ominous severity.

Sybil shrugged her shoulders disdainfully.

"I suppose I shall be compelled as before if I decline," she retorted, with a curling of her red lips. "Yet only a most foolish fellow would ask such a question."

"I am that foolish fellow, then," said Keene, with unabated firmness. "Why were you listening at the library door?"

"Goodness gracious, sir, my uncle had been murdered!" Sybil now said forcibly. "Is it strange that I should feel an interest in what is to follow? Do I not hope his death may be avenged? Am I not a woman? Did you ever know a woman without a woman's share of curiosity? Attribute my conduct to that, if you like—or to anything else you please! For this is all the answer you will receive from me, Mr. Presumptuous Detective—and that's final!"

A faint, doubtful smile relaxed the severity of Sheridan Keene's eyes and mouth. He guessed the truth—that the girl had now overcome her first feelings of dismay and alarm, and had taken a position she was resolved to maintain. In this case, he felt there was nothing to be gained from her then and there.

In reply to her defiant words, he said simply:

"You think so, do you?"

"I know so, sir! May I now go to my room?"

"If you wish—yes!"

He bowed profoundly as she swept by him, but his crafty gaze never left her splendid face.

And startling him again, even as she was evidently startled anew, he saw the light in her frowning eyes suddenly change, and that deathly pale—dispel again the flush but briefly risen to her velvety cheeks.

He glanced through a window toward which she necessarily had turned.

A young man, just emerged from the thicker woodland beyond the cleared park, was hurrying toward the house. Sybil Howard also had observed him, giving her that sudden start, Detective Keene had no doubt.

He wheeled sharply on his heel and returned to the library, purposely closing the door somewhat noisily.

As he had intended, the girl thought herself well rid of him.

An expression of triumph instantly lighted her face.

But the cunning of Detective Keene was greater far than she dreamed.

TO BE CONTINUED.

NIHILISTS' SOCIETIES.

From far back into the shadowy beginnings of history, secret societies have flourished in every country in the world. In Russia, Germany, China, secret societies, with murderous objects in view, are quite numerous.

The most powerful and most terrible of all, however, is the mysterious fellowship of the nihilists. The arms of this society embrace every country in the world.

The writer once had the dubious pleasure of meeting a nihilist of the most violent type, and narrowly escaped being enrolled a member of the society. Being genuinely indignant at the tyrannies and abuses tolerated in Russia, he expressed himself rather warmly on the subject, and the nihilist's eyes flashed, as he fancied he recognized a brother.

Grasping the writer by the hand, he led him to the smoking room of an out-of-the-way inn, and there poured out his soul.

He was really very eloquent, and delivered a terrible

indictment of the Russian government. One felt that almost any measures to overthrow this intolerable tyranny would be justifiable.

But my eloquent friend suddenly became calm, and startled me with the following proposal, delivered in the calmest and most matter-of-fact manner possible:

"Now, my young friend, we have a scheme on foot. Will you join us?"

"What do you propose?" was the natural query.

"Well, in a few weeks' time, we are going to 'remove' a high Russian official, who has rendered himself objectionable. He, his wife, and three children will probably be blown up together. Now, it seems——"

But the look of horror which greeted this agreeable piece of information put the nihilist on his guard.

His manner changed in a moment, and he tried all the arts of Russian diplomacy to win back the good opinion and sympathy he had lost.

The man was interesting as a study, but the writer of these lines was glad to get out of his company, and did not hesitate to give information to the police.

The official reply, however, was not encouraging:

"We can do nothing, sir. What can you prove against the man?"

Whether the infamous scheme ever came to anything, we do not know.

The object of the nihilists is to kill the czars and higher officials of state one after the other, so that at last none shall be found courageous enough to occupy these lofty, but dangerous, positions.

People of every country and in every rank of life belong to this terrible society, and hold themselves ready to obey any command from headquarters.

In Russia, members of the society are to be found among the police, and in the royal palace itself.

All the correspondence is a cipher; the meetings are secret. The very language used by members is quite incomprehensible to a nonmember.

There are, besides, many secret societies in other countries, whose object is the furtherance of advanced political ideas. These go by all kinds of names, but, although the members give vent to very inflammatory opinions, they are practically harmless.

JAGUAR STORIES.

By CAPTAIN EUGENE.

Among the most dreaded animals of South America, that the traveler encounters, is the jaguar, known to the natives by the name of tiger. There are no such animals in the country as the tiger, although that is the accepted name of the one in question. The marks of the jaguar, instead of being in stripes as upon the Bengal tiger, are in rings, and in another species common to the forests of Geveno, the skin is of a very dark brown, the spots being visible only under the broad gleam of the sun. This latter animal is by far the most ferocious of the two.

I never wondered that the more ignorant of my countrymen gave the name of tiger to the *Felis Oncas*. I have known them to obtain such a size as to measure nearly eight feet from the nose to the tip of the tail. They will kill a horse or an ox, and then drag him away from the vicinity of a camp with as much ease as a lion of the East would do the same thing.

Although unquestionably the most powerful among the wild animals of the Continent, the jaguar is by no means such a terrible animal as is generally supposed. Although he may make the night hideous from his dismal howls, it is very rarely that he attacks a man, except perhaps when hard driven by hunger. Should a traveler be alone, this sagacious beast will sometimes follow him mile after mile with stealthy steps, and then, when he has lain down in slumber, spring upon him and tear him to pieces.

When by a too frequent visit to the neighboring corrals of the farmhouse, he has slaughtered numbers of their inmates, he acquires the name of *cebado*, an unlucky but still fear-inspiring title, as in the case of the crocodile. The *cebado* is believed to possess extraordinary daring and instinct, making him the most dreaded of all animals, as the one most difficult to entrap or slay. It is said—and I do not deny that the belief is shared in a degree by myself—that after the jaguar has once tasted human blood, his appetite for it is insatiable in his eagerness to procure the delicacy.

When the jaguar acquires such a notoriety, the owners of the cattle farms in the vicinity usually call a meeting of the *hateros* around them—men who are skillful in the use of the lasso and lance—firearms being seldom used in an expedition of this kind—and with the assistance of a pack of dogs known as *tigreros*, and trained especially for this work, they surround the wood containing the tiger, and beating around in the jungle drive him out into the open plain, where mounted men are awaiting him, with lasso and lance. Sometimes, the jaguar, aware of his danger, refuses to quit his cover. At such times, a number of the most daring matadoes, assisted by the dogs, attack him in his lair, where, if he remains, the same fate awaits him as if he passed out upon the plain. The *hateros* dislike such encounters as these, as they are always full of extreme danger, while the capture and death of one upon the open plains is the finest kind of sport.

In his wild state, the jaguar is one of the most beautiful of all wild animals. I have never seen a creature more easy and graceful in his movements, and possessed of such remarkable agility—in springing from tree to tree, and in bounding through the tall grass of the savannah. He can ascend a tree with very nearly as much celerity as the monkeys, among which he sometimes makes terrible havoc, and which dread him greatly on that account.

I once knew a huge, powerful sambo who had an encounter with one of these brutes. He had been riding very hard through the day, and, feeling very weary and tired, he lay down at nightfall beneath a clump of palm trees, picketing his horse a short distance away so that he might crop the grass while his master slept.

He was just passing off into slumber, when he was startled by the rustling of leaves. Looking around him, he failed to see anything, and was in the act of lying down again, when, as he looked upward, he caught sight of a jaguar in the branches, that was in the very act of springing upon him. Quick as lightning, the sambo sprang to his feet, but ere he could unsheath his sword the animal was upon him.

As the animal landed plump upon him, the fellow, with rare skill and presence of mind, caught the top of his head with his left hand, and with his right forefinger

gouged his eye so strongly, that it was forced out of the socket. The pain thus inflicted was so acutely tormenting that the jaguar ran galloping away in great agony, and the sambo was not molested further. But he had already received wounds which he carried with him to the grave.

Some years previous to this occurrence, I was told of a woman who had encountered one of these dreaded animals. Provided with a machete—a sort of ax—she had gone into the woods near her home for the purpose of cutting a quantity of wood for domestic use. She had cut but a few branches, when a deep, rumbling growl startled her, and so filled her with fear that for a moment she was deprived of her consciousness. Yet in a moment she recovered her presence of mind and comprehended her critical situation. She knew that precipitate flight was the surest means of bringing instant destruction to herself, and she therefore concluded to conceal herself behind a large tree near her. Such a thing, however, was impossible. She had stood in her hiding place but a moment, when she saw a huge jaguar, with glowing eyeballs slowly approaching her. The woman now gave herself up for lost, and began repeating the prayers of her patron saint.

In the meantime, the jaguar continued advancing, his dreadful roar seeming to shake the very ground upon which they stood. When a few yards away, he cleared the intervening space at one bound, alighting at the foot of the tree, but upon the side opposite from that where the woman stood. As he grasped the trunk with both paws, the woman, quick as thought, struck one of these such a blow with her machete that it was completely severed and fell to the ground. Howling and disabled the brute turned to flee; but had gone but a few paces, when he turned in great fury to renew the attack. Limping as he was, he was now far from being the formidable beast of a few moments before, and the woman waited his attack with considerable self-confidence.

Contrary to his usual custom, but from a very evident cause, the jaguar did not make any leap, but advanced at a limping gait straight to the woman. Gathering all her strength in the blow—for she well knew that her life depended upon it—she struck him upon the head with such force that he fell stunned to the ground. To make matters sure, she repeated the blow, and then, without awaiting his recovery, she made all haste to her house.

In a lonely ranch once lived a poor widow, who had been presented with a small jaguar cub by some friendly vaqueros who had picked it up. Out of compassion for the helpless creature, she took it, and by the milk of her own goats preserved its life. She treated it with such care and kindness, that as the cub increased in age and strength it became greatly attached to her; lying at her feet like a cat; but its natural traits soon showed themselves. The widow's goats gradually and surely diminished; and to gratify its thirst for game, and to save her own property, the woman gave it the range of the adjoining woods. It became very successful in these excursions, and invariably brought home some game which it laid with pride at its mistress' feet.

One day the widow was visited by a number of friends; and anxious to provide them with a suitable dinner, she started out in the woods with her favorite, promising to be back at meal time with a sufficient quantity to afford them a splendid repast. Dinner time came and passed, and brought no signs of her or the jaguar. They never returned, and my reader need not be told what was the fate of the poor widow, who had trusted so much to such a detestable brute.

ROUGH ON THE BOYS.

In a certain academy it was announced that a new teacher of mathematics was coming the next day, and the boys prepared to initiate him.

They went to a narrow lane, up which he would probably come, and rigged up a complicated apparatus to trip him up and shower him with flour.

While thus engaged, a well-dressed, stylish young man surprised them. He was a stranger, and they imagined he came from another school near by, which impression was heightened when he volunteered his services, and suggested many improvements in the "trap."

When completed, the boys and their new friend moved away some distance to await the result. Two hours passed in uncomfortable silence, and then one of the leaders said:

"I don't believe he'll come to-night."

"Oh, yes!" said the stranger pleasantly, "the truth is he has come."

"What!" cried the boys.

"In fact," continued the young man, "I am Professor C——, and I hope our relations will continue to be agreeable. I am sorry to have disappointed you by coming by an earlier train; but I am glad, because it has made us acquainted in a very effective way."

The boys tried no more tricks on that professor.

SOME WISE SAYINGS.

A success usually makes money, but money doesn't necessarily make a success.

Nearly everybody wants to do the right thing, only opinions differ as to what is the right thing to do.

Silence is the brightest jewel in the crown of ignorance.

If a man can't be happy at home he deserves to be miserable.

If poor judgment is the blossom, bad luck is the fruit.

A man never makes a bid for notoriety when he does his duty.

Any fool can ask questions that will make a wise man back pedal.

It doesn't pay to worry—unless you are drawing a salary for it.

Your opinion is all right in the estimation of others—if you happen to think as they do.

WHY WATER SIMMERS BEFORE BOILING.

The heat being applied to the bottom of the vessel, the lowest layer of the water becomes hot first, and after a time some of it is converted into steam, forming a bubble, which rises into the upper part of the liquid. This upper part is still below the boiling point, and so the bubble collapses with a sharp, rattling noise called simmering. When, however, the upper part has become sufficiently hot, the bubbles do not collapse, but escape at the surface. The water is then in the state called boiling.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Pet Canine Fosters Little Porkers.

Nellie, the Boston bull terier, at No. 51 engine house, Troy Hill, Pittsburgh, is not only mourning the loss of her litter of pups, but a pair of suckling pigs she had adopted. Nellie has the maternal instinct strong within her breast, and when her puppies were taken from her last week and scattered far and wide she would not be comforted. Captain William Higgins, of the engine company, visited the stockyards at Herrs Island, where he was presented with a pair of wee, motherless pigs.

Captain Higgins took the pigs to the engine house, fixed them a bed, and hied himself to a drug store for a couple of nursing bottles. These he had filled with warm malted milk. But when he got back to the engine house he found no use there for his nursing bottle. Nellie, meanwhile, had found the orphan piggies. When they were taken from her and sent to a Reserve Township farmer she showed as much concern and grief as she did when her own babies were taken.

Five Thousand Dollars for a Flea.

Alfred Charles de Rothschild, of London, is said, on the authority of Edmond Perrier, of the French Institute, to have paid $5,000 for a specimen of a rare variety of flea—one of the kind which is occasionally found in the skin of the sea otter.

The flea is to be added to Mr. de Rothschild's entomological collection.

Prairie Dogs All but Exterminated.

If you want to see a prairie-dog town you'll have to hurry. The government biological survey, western State agricultural departments, forest rangers, stockmen, farmers, and homesteaders are out on the firing line, and the prairie dog, last of the old denizens of the Great Plains, gives way before them. The plow tears through the streets of the cities of prairie dogdom, irrigation waters pour down their homes, and in the lean and hungry springtime when Mr. and Mrs. Prairie Dog crawl out from their winter's rest, poisoned wheat and alfalfa so dear to their hearts await them at their very doorsills.

Time was not long ago when thousands of these dog towns or cities as they really were, existed all through Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, the Dakotas, and the Rocky Mountain States. To the cattle and sheepmen the millions of creatures which inhabited them were a far greater menace than wolves, mountain lions, coyotes, and all other predatory creatures combined. They swept the range of vegetation more disastrously than a prairie fire. On devastating one area, they pulled up stakes and moved on to found a new town.

Some years ago a tract of hundreds of thousands of acres in western Kansas swarmed with them. The State became interested, manufactured poison by the barrel, and sent it out to the infested region. Wheat dipped in the poisonous mixture was scattered over the region, with excellent results. The biological survey, farmers, and cattlemen have followed the precedent set by Kansas since and for a number of years have been annually poisoning them in great numbers. In the National Forest, where cattle and sheep are ranged, an important work of the forest service is the poisoning of prairie dogs.

A funny thing happened in North Dakota. An enterprising legislator at one time introduced a bill providing that the different counties pay a bounty for prairie dogs. The measure became a law. No sooner was it in force than the pelts of the dogs began pouring into the county offices in such enormous numbers that the county treasuries were threatened with bankruptcy, and in haste the law was repealed.

The prairie dog is a bold, saucy fellow. His most interesting occupation is that of sitting on top of his burrow, barking incessantly, flipping his funny little tail with each yap. Walk along by a town and a dog or two or three will be seen sitting on almost every burrow. They will stay there and bark at you in defiant unison until you approach quite close. They are on the watch, however, and if you move your arm as though in the act of throwing something, in a flash they turn and vanish into their holes.

Attempt to shoot them, and they will nearly always duck too soon, or, if they are hit, will fall back into the burrow, leaving the hunter undecided whether he hit or not. The burrows, it is believed, are often connected by underground runways. The oft-told story that rattlesnakes and burrowing owls make their homes with prairie dogs is not a myth, but a fact, so say the plainsmen. That the relationship is friendly is not well substantiated. It is probably the truth that the snakes and owls find the ready-made homes in which to sleep away the winter to their liking, and that in return for the hospitality of the prairie dog are not averse to dining off the puppies now and then.

Woman Dies at Age of 110.

Mrs. Nora Sullivan died in Potsdam, N. Y., recently, aged 110. She was born in County Kerry, Ireland, and was employed in the household of Daniel O'Connell, the Irish barrister, before coming to America seventy-five years ago.

She had used tobacco for the past eighty years. Her mind had been affected for several months, but she was in good physical health.

Paying Penalty for Misdeeds.

Some time ago it was reported that Al J. Jennings, who was a train robber in Oklahoma and the Southwest for several years before he was sentenced, in 1897, to serve five years in the penitentiary at Columbus, Ohio, intended to seek nomination for the governorship of Oklahoma. Jennings now confirms the report, and has opened his campaign. He says that if he becomes governor he will apply himself to prison-reform work.

"I am entering the race as a Democrat," said Jennings. "And if I find there is another honest man in the field I will not help elect a machine man by staying in the race to split the honest vote. I intend to fight all double-dealing politicians.

"Some people do not seem to be able to understand how

an outlaw, former train robber, and Federal prisoner can become sincerely law-abiding and a reformer in politics, but the explanation is simple. I made a mistake and defied the law. I was caught and punished, kept five years in prison, and then saw how I had been wrong to become an enemy of society. I decided to reclaim my place in society, and set about doing it. As soon as I became a free man, living in a free community, I began to appreciate the differences in law breaking and the consequences thereof—and that made me a political reformer.

"I will stump the State and speak from street corners and halls wherever I can. I intend to speak in every county of the State as often as possible. I shall name political crooks in the open, and show my evidence against them."

Jennings won the nomination for county attorney of Oklahoma County in 1912, but was defeated by a Republican. The ex-bandit served five years in prison before he was pardoned by President McKinley. President Roosevelt later restored his citizenship. Soon after, Jennings studied law, and began its practice in Oklahoma City.

Recently he published a story of his life, relating many thrilling adventures. Several critics charged that in this work he frequently departed from the facts, but Jennings asserted that every word he wrote was true, and that he could prove it

A Fatal Snowball Fight.

Half a dozen boy companions of Elmer Gustuck, 16 years old, recently engaged in a snowball fight in Minneapolis, Minn. One of the stray balls struck an unidentified man. He seized Gustuck, after a chase, slashed the boys' throat with a knife, and escaped. Physicians at a hospital to which Gustuck was taken asserted that he could not recover.

New Federal League Displays its Strength.

The success of the Federal League—the new baseball organization with clubs in Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Toronto, Baltimore, Kansas City, and Buffalo—in inducing ball players held under the "reserve clause" by teams in organized baseball circles, to sign contracts with the so-called "outlaw" league, has caused a mighty stir among club owners and fans.

The Federal League, which is termed "outlaw" because it is not affiliated with the baseball 'trust," refuses to recognize the "reserve clause" in the contracts of organized baseball clubs, although it does recognize as valid the contract itself. The reserve clause is a rider which gives the club a right to hold a player from year to year.

For this reason the Federals are not attempting to sign players who have affixed their signatures to contracts for the 1914 season, but are throwing all their arguments and resources at the star major and minor league men, who are held to certain clubs, by the reserve clause only, which, it is claimed, is invalid, and would be declared so in the courts.

Last year the Federal League was considered a joke, but within the last three months men of money have become identified with the organization, and some of the real stars of the major league have signed contracts to manage or play with the Federals.

The signing of Joe Tinker, former Chicago Cub star, the last season manager of the Cincinnati Reds, to manage the Chicago Federals; of Mordecai Brown, another former Chicago Cub star, who recently explained the art of throwing curves, to manage the St. Louis club; of Otto Knabe, second baseman of the Philadelphia club, to manage Baltimore; of Jimmy Sheckard, former outfielder with the Chicago Cubs, to manage Pittsburgh; and of many other star players of the National League, shows that the new league has financial backing. Otherwise, such wise ball players would refuse to cast their lot with it.

National League clubs, especially Philadelphia and Cincinnati, have lost the majority of the players who have abandoned organized baseball, but the Federals claim they are not warring with the old major league any more than with the American.

As soon as Joe Tinker had agreed to manage the Chicago team, he began signing such players and stars as Brennan and Killifer, of the Philadelphia Nationals, Cole, of the New York Americans, and Packard, of the Cincinnati Reds. In addition to Sheckard, Pittsburgh signed Artie Hoffman, former Chicago Cub. George Stovall, last year leader of the St. Louis American League team, who was the first of the star major leaguers to become affiliated with the Federals, declares he will begin getting players for his Kansas City club soon.

But many of the star players have refused to deal with the new organization, among them being Konetchy, Hendrix, and McQuillen, of Pittsburgh, Johnson, of Washington, Walsh and Sullivan, of the Chicago White Sox, Joe Wood, of the Boston Red Sox, Jake Daubert, of Brooklyn, and Baumgardner, of the St. Louis Browns.

The invasion of the Federals has thrown organized baseball in the air, and has placed an air of uncertainty about the national game, thereby blocking proposed trades and deals for players and plans for the coming season. It also had a bearing on the willingness of the national commission to allow the demands made on organized baseball by the Players' Fraternity, which is made up of major-league ball players.

While some of the major-league magnates claim the Federals will never be able to open the season, the leaders of the latter organization promise many surprises during the coming two months, and say they will be able to furnish as good a class of baseball as the National and American Leagues.

The first step to fight the Federals was announced when the Toronto International League club purchased the franchise of Berlin, of the Canadian League, with the intention of moving it to Toronto to play when the class AA team is on the road.

Switzerland as a Red Cross Camp.

In the near future Switzerland will very likely present to the powers a request that in the event of a great European war all of Switzerland be constituted into a Red Cross camp for the care of the wounded of all the nations involved. This, Switzerland is now convinced, is the only way that not only her neutrality, but her very existence, could be preserved.

Although the neutrality of Switzerland is guaranteed by the leading powers, the Swiss government has recently become convinced that unless she has some actual way of insisting on the respecting of this neutrality that in a war between any of the four great powers surrounding her this guarantee would amount to very little. In addition, she is also convinced that the first step in any Euro-

pean war would be the prohibition by all the powers involved of the exports of coal and provisions which they would need for their own armies. As Switzerland is entirely dependent on the surrounding powers not only for her coal, but for the grain and practically all her food supply, the cutting off of these imports would reduce the entire country to starvation within a few weeks.

It is in the hopes of exacting a guarantee from all of the four powers surrounding her not to interrupt these imports in case of war that Switzerland is considering the project of having the entire country declared a great international Red Cross camp, and to undertake the care of the wounded of all nations in the event of any general European war. Members of the Swiss government who are backing the movement declare that this would not only insure for Switzerland the neutrality and all of the protection that is accorded by international agreement to the Red Cross camps in time of war, but it would also insure that her industries would not be ruined by the cutting off of the coal supply and her population reduced to starvation by the stopping of food imports.

The treaty to be submitted to the powers will provide that as fast as the wounded are cured they will be returned to their respective countries. This, Switzerland is convinced, would be of enough importance to any of the powers engaged in a European war to make certain that none of them would violate her neutrality by crossing the boundary with one of its armies or interfere with her food supply.

Pistol Carrier Gets Seven Years.

Judge Crain, in general sessions, sounded a warning to pistol carriers when he imposed a sentence of seven years in Sing Sing, the limit under the Sullivan law, on Gaetano Avitiable, an ex-convict. Avitiable was arrested on October 4 at 328 East One Hundred and Sixth Street, New York, just after he had shot a man. He attempted to shoot Detective Caputo, who made the arrest.

"This city is no place for you," said Judge Crain, in sentencing him. "The police say you are a desperate character, and that at the time of your arrest you were charged with shooting a man who had incurred your displeasure. The Sullivan law was created for men such as you."

Pitchers' Wildness Due to Fadeaway.

Cy Falkenberg isn't surprised at all to find that the official pitching averages recently issued from Ban Johnson's office show him to have uncorked more wild pitches during the 1913 baseball season than any other American League twirler.

The fact is, he rather expected that he would lead the league in untamed hurls or that, if he didn't, he would be close on the heels of the leader. He blames it all on the fadeaway, and says it's the nature of the beast to cause wild pitches.

"The fadeaway," declares Cy, "is naturally a dirt ball. By that I mean that it hits the ground close back of the plate. You will notice that Fred Carisch, who was my regular catcher all season, hugged the plate as close as he could back of the batsman. Well, he did that to spear these 'dirt balls' before they got a chance to dig into the ground, but naturally he couldn't get them all. He was doing great work to get as many as he did, and lots of times he just had to make a wild stab and really accomplished quite a feat when he prevented the ball from getting away.

"It was because he was used to handling fadeaways that he was sent behind the bat in all the games I pitched. I'm to be congratulated that only thirteen wild pitches got away from him all season."

Daring Feat Nets a Rancher's Daughter $4.

The Jack Abernathys and the athletic cowboys actually in service on ranches, who have gloried in the distinction of having captured wolves in various ways, have no laurels greater than those won at Obar, N. M., by Miss Nancy Anderson, 19 years old, and the daughter of a farmer ranchman. Miss Anderson, with the aid of her pony and her knowledge of the act of twirling the rope, lassoed a wild coyote on the prairie, killed the animal with a rock, took it to town, and demanded the county bounty of $2.

Miss Anderson was out for a morning pleasure ride on the road to Obar, when she encountered the coyote. She put spurs to her pony, made a big loop with her lariat, and gave chase. The first blow was successful. Then she dragged the coyote a short distance to where a rock large enough to kill it was obtainable. Besides the $2 she received from the county, she was given $2 for the hide.

Thousands Perish in Volcanic Fire.

Thousands of residents of the city of Kagoshima, Japan, and of the island of Sakura have perished in the volcanic disturbances of that vicinity. The city, with a population of 60,000, is almost buried in ashes and stones, and escape has been cut off by a huge rock hurled from the volcano Sakura-Jima, which wrecked the railroad tracks. Many of those who escaped from the city were caught in the streams of lava or were drowned by a huge tidal wave.

Tragic? No, Absurd!

Not knowing that the child of William Burger, with whom he boarded, in Pittsburgh, was a girl, Matt Sisno, aged 22, shot himself because Burger had not complied with a request of Sisno that the child be named after him.

Sisno had asked that the child be called Matt. When he was told his wish had not been granted, he became despondent.

After shooting himself, he murmured his disappointment at the refusal of the request. After the wound was dressed, Sisno was told of his mistake, and Burger has promised to call his next son Matt Sisno Burger.

Broken Kneecaps in Aeroplane Plunge.

L. M. Bell, of El Paso, Texas, fell 300 feet in an aëroplane and escaped with two broken kneecaps and minor internal injuries. Physicians say he will be a cripple for life. Engine trouble caused the aëroplane to drop.

Maisel High-priced Player.

Fritz Maisel, of the New York Americans, and Larry Chappelle, of the Chicago White Sox, were the two highest-priced ball players of 1913. Fritz cost President Frank Farrell $12,000 and two players, while Chappelle, outfielder, cost the Sox $18,000.

Some gilt-edged laddies, these, eh?

Maisel has established a reputation as the kingpin of the New York American infield, and will be a big aid to

the team next season. Manager Frank Chance has several deals in process of completion which will bring him other able players for 1914 and relieve him of the burden of having to fight desperately to keep out of last place in the race.

Maisel came from the Baltimore team of the International League, and, like Chappelle, made good in his first year in the big leagues.

Tango is Part of His Training.

Joe Mandot is not the only lightweight who believes in the tango as an aid to training. Freddy Welsh likes to tango so well that he is frequently seen at one of the popular New Orleans night restaurants, and when Freddy has the floor the majority of the other dancers stop and watch him. His good looks, good tangoing, cheerful disposition, and intelligent conversation have led him into the highest society that frequents the café after the theater. He spends an hour this way nearly every evening, but, of course, bars wine and alcoholic drinks from his menu.

While Freddy is training and tangoing in New Orleans, Mrs. Welsh is making a tour of the world. She is now in Australia.

English Alpinists' Narrow Escape.

Five English Alpinists, including a girl and a boy, were found almost frozen in a snow hut near the summit of the Dole, one of the highest peaks of the Swiss Jura. They had attempted to climb the mountain on skis and were overtaken by a blizzard. The condition of the tourists was serious, but they were transported on sledges to a hotel, and will probably recover.

Oxford Will Meet Penn.

Oxford University will send a team from England to compete at the annual relay races under the auspices of the University of Pennsylvania next April.

There are three men on the Oxford team capable of running the mile in less than 4 minutes 20 seconds. They are Tabor, formerly of Brown; Jackson, the Englishman who won the 1,500-meter race at the 1913 Olympic games, and Rudd, the South African half-mile champion.

McKinley's Guard is Dead.

Jack McCauley, soldier of fortune, died at Kansas City, Mo., January 6, of typhoid fever.

McCauley, when a guard at the Pan-American Exposition, at Buffalo, N. Y., stood beside President McKinley when he was shot by Leon Czolgosz. McCauley held Czolgosz until other officers arrived. For his bravery he received a special medal from the exposition officers and a letter of thanks from Congress.

McCauley served in the Spanish-American War, both in the regular and volunteer service. He served in the Philippines as a regular and was a member of Company C, One Hundred and Sixtieth Indiana Volunteers, organized in Lafayette, Ind. He also took part in revolutions in Mexico and South America.

$30,000,000 Heir Runs Car.

Otto Buck Churchill, who came to South Bend, Ind., to seek a wife, and who says he is the heir to an estate of $30,000,000, provided he marries before July 25, decided to combine business with pleasure while looking for a mate by taking a job as a street-car conductor on the Northern Indiana Railway Company. He announces he will hold it until he finds his bride, if the company lets him.

Churchill is receiving many offers of marriage through a letter he sent to an Indianapolis newspaper, one coming from an Indianapolis girl, who wrote:

"I can't qualify myself, you dear man, as I am only sixteen; but I have a charming mother, who is just thirty-eight. She's good looking, and would cut some splash in the fancy clothes your money would be able to buy her."

Hounds Trail Deer in Town.

When a seven-prong buck, trailed by a pack of hounds, ran through the principal streets of Forrest City, Ark., the entire population turned out to see the fun, and more genuine thrills were produced than at any time for many months. The hounds, in full cry, entered the city at one corner, and traversed the entire length of the town, and then back again to the Rock Island depot, where the deer was brought to bay under a platform. The ginneries closed down, the stores were vacated, and every one joined in the chase.

When the hounds were beaten off, the frightened animal was brought out from under the platform and the discovery was made that it was Treasurer George P. Taylor's pet buck, that had escaped from its quarters, and which had later been started by the treasurer's hounds about three miles north of the city.

Eats 250 Oysters in Contest.

George C. Monroe, of Salt Lake City, Utah, is one of the best oyster eaters of the age. In a catch-as-catch-can, go-as-you-please contest in a café, he defeated Albert H. Jams, of Palmyra, Mo., by eating 250 oysters to his opponent's 198.

The Palmyra man had a good reputation as a glutton, but he was not in the same class with Monroe, who swallowed 250 honest-to-goodness bivalves without wavering, coughing, choking, or calling in the hospital corps. However, James led, up to the one hundred and fiftieth oyster, when he began showing signs of distress, and a few other things.

George Deal, a St. Louis saloon man, holds the local record with a perfect score of 300 clean swallows with a big fat oyster for each gulp. However, it is likely that Monroe could equal Deal's record, for he was strong when his contest with James was stopped, he having won by a wide margin.

Six Save 300-pound Man.

It took the combined efforts of four New York policemen and two milk-wagon drivers to hoist Dennis Kelleher, 32 years old, of 384 Main Street, Bridgeport, Conn., who weighs more than 300 pounds, out of the cold waters of the East River. He had tumbled from the steamboat *Naugatuck*, near East Fifty-third Street.

Patrolman Hozinsky, of the East Fifty-third Street station, heard cries coming from the river about six o'clock, and he ran to the pier at the foot of East Fifty-third Street, where he saw a man puffing and blowing in the water as he struggled to keep afloat, and grabbed at the wooden piles.

After throwing a life-preserver with a line to the man, Hozinsky blew his whistle, which brought Patrolmen Maskiell, Wallace, and Conkling. The four men hauled

away on the line attached to the life-preserver, and, just as he was being raised out of the water, the line parted. The four policemen sat down suddenly, and at the same time a loud splash sounded from the water.

Two passing milk-wagon drivers came to aid, and a small hawser was made fast to the life-preserver. The six men thus succeeded in hauling Kelleher to the pier.

After giving his name and address, the man became unconscious, and was taken in an ambulance to the Flower Hospital, where he was restored. He said that he must have fallen off the stern of the *Naugatuck* when he was asleep.

Ball Players Pleased.

The committee which represented the Baseball Players' Fraternity before the National commission in Cincinnati, recently issued a statement expressing satisfaction at the granting of so large a proportion of their demands, and pleasure at the attitude of baseball's highest tribunal toward the players. Regret was implied that the fraternity did not meet with more success for the minor-league members before the representatives of the lower-class organizations. The statement reads:

"We believe that in the Cincinnati conference of January 6 the ball players won a victory which a year ago could not have been dreamed of. Twelve of our requests were granted, three modified, and two withdrawn. Eight or ten of them were opposed very vigorously, but with the utmost frankness and good feeling.

"We met far more opposition from the minor-league representatives than from the National commission, and were, therefore, unable to do as much for our minor-league members as we had hoped. But even as it is, they will be materially helped. These representatives, we felt, were sincere in their belief that an undue hardship would be placed upon them unless some requests were modified, and, as we had no disposition to bring this about, we waived the points.

"The treatment accorded us, except in the offensive attitude of one of the conferees, was all that we could have asked. We were met in a fair, cordial, and dignified manner, which, in view of the strained relations previously existing, was gratifying in the extreme."

The statement was signed by John P. Henry, Edward M. Reulbach, Jacob E. Daubert, John B. Miller, Ray W. Collins, and David L. Fultz.

Men Replace "Hello Girls."

Seventy-five young men have entered the school of instructions of the Pittsburgh & Allegheny Telephone Company, in Pittsburgh, Pa., and within a few days will begin work as telephone operators, manning the switchboards after nine o'clock at night.

They will displace girls, who are prohibited under the new child-labor law, from working after that hour.

Huge Meteor Passes Over Western France.

The people of western France were startled recently by the passage of an enormous meteor, which was first seen at Tours.

The phenomenon took the form of an immense train of intense white flame rushing across the sky at terrific speed. It was accompanied by frequent and deafening explosions, which broke windows.

The meteor was also observed at Montlucon, Cholet, and other places. It appears to have fallen into the sea beyond Paimpol, on the English Channel, causing disturbances in that district which were mistaken for an earthquake.

Collie Saves Master from Bull.

A Scotch collie dog saved the life of Charles Kirby, near Griswold, Iowa, after an angry bull had got Kirby down and was goring him with his horns. The dog had accompanied Kirby into the pasture and after the man had been knocked down the dog appeared to sense his master's danger, and, making a savage attack on the bull, chewing its knees, succeeded in preventing the animal from killing Kirby, and kept it interested in warding off the dog's attack until help came.

Though About Fifty, Jenkens Wrestles.

Although nearly fifty years old, Tom Jenkins, former wrestling champion, recently marked his return to the mat game by defeating an opponent in a tourney at Boston. Except for a tinge of gray hair, he appeared to be young and in fine condition.

With Frank Gotch, present champion, on the retired list, Jenkins thinks he has a chance to defeat some of the foreign heavyweights for the wrestling title.

Mind is Blank for a Month.

When W. S. McClaren, twenty-eight years old, a railroad man, from Bloomington, Ill., awoke on the platform of the railway station at Mounds, Okla., he was unable to tell where he was or to explain where he had been since December 1, although he knew his name, and all the events that had transpired prior to that time.

McClaren came to Okmulgee, Okla., and found Sheriff Thompson to whom he told his story. A telegram to the man's relatives confirmed his story. He was given a ticket to St. Louis, where he was met by relatives.

McClaren was operated on for appendicitis in November, and it was while he was recovering that he disappeared.

Tramp Was Frozen to Engine.

With his clothes covered with ice, Harry Steele, of Philadelphia, was saved from death when a New York-Washington express train was flagged at the main station at Trenton, N. J., and he was dragged from the engine tender. He was stealing a ride to Philadelphia. When the train passed a watering trough at Elizabeth his clothing was covered with water, which immediately froze.

Cat is a Better Retriever.

Lynn Bloom, of Hardisty, Canada, is the proud owner of a big cat that takes a dog's place in the hunt, and is of greater value than most dogs for that purpose. In a recent hunt of two hours, twenty-two rabbits were killed.

"The cat," says Bloom, "will follow by my side for miles. When he sees a rabbit he will squat down close to the ground and flash his tail from side to side until I shoot, then like a flash he makes for the rabbit, seldom failing to get it by the neck and holding it until I get to him. The cat will ride on the horse to the hunting grounds. After the rabbits are loaded on the horse, he will take his seat on the game bag and ride home. Should a rabbit be wounded he will take the scent like a dog, only he is much more skilled than the average dog. This

remarkable cat is equally good for partridges, and when he sees the gun he mews and scampers with delight. He weighs fifteen pounds, and woe betide the dog that insults him."

In India the cat has long been utilized for hunting, but it has remained for Bloom to demonstrate his value to a sportsman.

Aeroplane Breaks a Roof.

Eugène Gilbert, a French aviator, narrowly escaped death while flying over Paris recently, when he descended on a roof, through which his aëroplane broke and was wrecked.

Gilbert was making a trial trip in a new army monoplane carrying a heavy load, with which he had ascended from the aërodrome at Issy-les-Moulineaux. He had flown to Paris, where he circled the Eiffel Tower at a height of 1,000 feet. He then shut off his motor in preparation for a glide to the earth.

The aëroplane descended so rapidly that the aviator found he would be unable to avoid the buildings, and, as he could not restart his motor, he picked out the most promising landing place, the roof of a tile factory in the southwestern suburb of Grenelle.

The aviator escaped injury.

Bird Carried Bell Thirty Years.

A "belled buzzard," the jingle of whose bell was recently heard in north Georgia, and which is said to have been seen by a number of persons, is believed to be the same bird that was captured by three Tennesseeans near Russellville, in Hawkins County, in 1883. These men wired a bell to the buzzard's neck. For several years after 1883 the jingle of the bell was heard around Russellville, but later the buzzard migrated, returning to its old haunts occasionally, however. It is several years since the tinkle of its bell has been heard in Tennessee, and the residents of the Russellville community are convinced that the "belled" buzzard seen in Georgia is the Tennessee product, and that it has been one of the active members of its species all these years. If this is the same buzzard, it may now be considered upward of forty years old, for it was grown when captured.

Auto Tires Used as Life Preservers.

Five boys skating on Dark River, at Hartford, Conn., came to a thin strip of ice, and Charles Malloy, fourteen, who was in the lead, called to the four others:

"Come on, fellows. If we skate fast we can get over."

The next instant the five boys were in the water. Their cries brought workmen from the plant of the Hartford rubber works. It was growing dark and a workman turned on a big illuminating sign on the roof, which lighted up the pond.

The workmen carried inflated automobile tires, and these they threw to the boys. Four of them seized these and were saved. Malloy drowned.

Attacked by Ram.

If John Mathews, a wealthy retired farmer, of Leaf Bank, Calhoun County, W. Va., who was injured when attacked by a ram in a field near his home, survives, he will owe his life to his sheep dog, which went to his master's rescue, driving off the infuriated animal.

The dog then went for help a mile away, and by his peculiar actions drew rescuers to the side of the aged man, who was found unconscious and in a critical condition. Mathews, who is seventy-one, received honorable medals for his bravery while fighting with the Confederate army in the battle of Gettysburg.

New Marks in Chicago Races.

Three world's records, the 120, 200, and 220 yards, were broken in the first swim for the Central Amateur Athletic Union championships, first honors going to the Illinois Athletic Club. H. J. B. Hebner and Perry McGillivray were the record breakers.

Hebner won the 220-yard race in 2 minutes 21 seconds; E. W. McGillivray, I. R. C., was second, and Ross Strayder, Northwestern University, third. The record was held by C. M. Daniels, of New York, and was 2:25 2-5. Hebner also lowered the 200-yard record in this race, making the distance in 2:07 2-5, against C. Healy's former time of 2:11 1-5.

Perry McGillivray won the 100-yard race in 56 seconds; W. R. Vosburgh, I. A. C., was second, and F. Harless, Chicago Athletic Association, third. McGillivray swam an extra length of the tank, going 120 yards in 1:08 2-5, lowering Daniels' record of 1:10.

Perry McGillivray also won the 880-yard swim in 12:32. Vosburgh was second, and J. R. Woods, Northwestern University, third.

Farmer is Heir to Millions.

Charles J. Aubuchon, a Missouri farmer, is the sole heir to the estate of John Parkin, who died in Norfolk, England, leaving a fortune of more than $10,000,000, according to word he has received. John Parkin was Aubuchon's grandfather on his mother's side of the family.

Aubuchon also claims an interest in several parcels of valuable land in St. Louis, Mo., which belonged to his father's family through Spanish land grants. Aubuchon, who is a widower, has one daughter, Mrs. Nellie Greer, who lives in Pettis County, Mo.

Atwood Got Advice of Wright.

Harry N. Atwood, of Toledo, recently conferred with Orville Wright regarding the possibility of making a flight across the Atlantic Ocean. He placed an order for a Wright hydroaëroplane to be used on Toledo Bay, so as to acquaint himself with the machine.

Wright and Atwood were studying the routes proposed as the best over which to make the Atlantic Ocean flight, and figuring on the time best suited for the attempt.

The Atwood hydroaëroplane is now being built in the Wright factory at Dayton, Ohio.

WE SHIP ON APPROVAL
without a cent deposit, prepay the freight and allow 10 DAYS FREE TRIAL.
IT ONLY COSTS one cent to learn our unheard of prices and marvelous offers on highest grade 1914 model bicycles.
FACTORY PRICES Do not buy a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you write for our large Art Catalog and learn our wonderful proposition on first sample bicycle going to your town.
RIDER AGENTS everywhere are making big money exhibiting and selling our bicycles.
We Sell cheaper than any other factory.
TIRES, Coaster-Brake rear wheels, lamps, repairs and all sundries at half usual prices.
Do Not Wait; write today for our special offer.
MEAD CYCLE CO. Dept. F348 CHICAGO

The Nick Carter Stories

ISSUED EVERY SATURDAY — BEAUTIFUL COLORED COVERS

When it comes to detective stories worth while, the **Nick Carter Stories** contain the only ones that should be considered. They are not overdrawn tales of bloodshed. They rather show the working of one of the finest minds ever conceived by a writer. The name of Nick Carter is familiar all over the world and the stories of his adventures are read eagerly by millions in twenty different languages. No other stories have withstood the severe test of time so well as those contained in the **Nick Carter Stories.** It proves conclusively that they are the best.

We give herewith a list of some of the back numbers in print. You can have your news dealer order them or they will be sent direct by the publishers to any address upon receipt of the price in money or postage stamps.

666—Nick Carter's Master Struggle.
667—The Air-shaft Specter.
668—The Broken Latch.
669—Nick Carter's Sudden Peril.
670—The Man with the Missing Thumb.
671—Feltman, the "Fence."
672—A Night with Nick Carter.
673—In the Nick of Time.
674—The Dictator's Treasure.
675—Pieces of Eight.
676—Behind the Mask.
677—The Green Patch.
678—The Drab Thread.
679—The Live-wire Clue.
680—The Vampire's Prey.
681—The Policy King Baffled.
682—The Madman's Gig.
683—A Life at Stake.
684—Trailing a Secret Thread.
685—The Crimson Flash.
686—A Puzzle of Identities.
687—The Westervelt Option.
688—The Vanishing Heiress.
689—The Birth of a Mystery.
690—A Clue from the Past.
691—The Red Triangle.
692—Doctor Quartz Again.
693—The Famous Case of Doctor Quartz.
694—The Chemical Clue.
695—The Prison Cipher.
696—A Pupil of Doctor Quartz.
697—The Midnight Visitor.
698—The Master Crook's Match.
699—The Man Who Vanished.
700—The Garnet Gauntlet.
701—The Silver Hair Mystery.
702—The Cloak of Guilt.
703—A Battle for a Million.
704—Written in Red.
705—The Collodion Stain.
707—Rogues of the Air.
709—The Bolt from the Blue.
710—The Stockbridge Affair.
711—Secret from the Past.
712—Playing the Last Hand.
713—A Slick Article.
714—The Taxicab Riddle.
715—The Knife Thrower.
716—The Ghost of Bare-faced Jimmy.
717—The Master Rogue's Alibi.
719—The Dead Letter.
720—The Allerton Millions.
722—The House of Whispers.
723—The Blue Room Mystery.
728—The Mummy's Head.
729—The Statue Clue.
730—The Torn Card.
731—Under Desperation's Spur.
732—The Connecting Link.
735—The Abduction Syndicate.
736—The Toils of a Siren.
737—The Mark of a Circle.
738—A Plot Within a Plot.
739—The Dead Accomplice.
740—A Mysterious Robber.
741—The Green Scarab.
742—The Strangest Case on Record.
743—A Shot in the Dark.
746—The Secret Entrance.
747—The Cavern Mystery.
748—The Disappearing Fortune.
749—A Voice from the Past.
752—The Spider's Web.
753—The Man With a Crutch.
754—The Rajah's Regalia.
755—Saved from Death.
756—The Man Inside.
757—Out for Vengeance.
758—The Poisons of Exill.
759—The Antique Vial.
760—The House of Slumber.
761—A Double Identity.
762—"The Mocker's" Stratagem.
763—The Man that Came Back.
764—The Tracks in the Snow.
765—The Babbington Case.
766—The Masters of Millions.
767—The Blue Stain.
768—The Lost Clew.
769—The Midnight Message.
770—The Turn of a Card.
771—A Message in the Dust.
772—A Royal Flush.
773—The Metal Casket Mystery.
774—The Great Buddha Beryl.
775—The Vanishing Heiress.
776—The Unfinished Letter.
777—A Difficult Trail.
778—A Six-word Puzzle.
779—Dr. Quartz.
780—Dr. Quartz's Oath.
781—The Fate of Dr. Quartz.
782—A Woman's Stratagem.
783—The Cliff Castle Affair.
784—A Prisoner of the Tomb.
785—A Resourceful Foe.
786—The Heir of Dr. Quartz.
787—Dr. Quartz, the Second.
788—Dr. Quartz II. at Bay.
789—The Great Hotel Tragedies.
790—Zanoni, the Witch.
791—A Vengeful Sorceress.
792—The Prison Demon.
793—Doctor Quartz on Earth Again.
794—Doctor Quartz's Last Play.
795—Zanoni, the Transfigured.
796—The Lure of Gold.
797—The Man With a Chest.
798—A Shadowed Life.
799—The Secret Agent.
800—A Plot for a Crown.
801—The Red Button.
802—Up Against It.
803—The Gold Certificate.
804—Jack Wise's Hurry Call.
805—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase.
806—Nick Carter and the Broken Dagger.
807—Nick Carter's Advertisement.
808—The Kregoff Necklace.
809—The Footprints on the Rug.
810—The Copper Cylinder.
811—Nick Carter and the Nihilists.
812—Nick Carter and the Convict Gang.
813—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor.
814—The Triangled Coin.
815—Ninety-nine—and One.
816—Coin Number 77.
817—In the Canadian Wilds.
818—The Niagara Smugglers.
819—The Man Hunt.

NEW SERIES

NICK CARTER STORIES

1—The Man from Nowhere.
2—The Face at the Window.
3—A Fight for a Million.
4—Nick Carter's Land Office.
5—Nick Carter and the Professor.
6—Nick Carter as a Mill Hand.
7—A Single Clew.
8—The Emerald Snake.
9—The Currie Outfit.
10—Nick Carter and the Kidnaped Heiress.
11—Nick Carter Strikes Oil.
12—Nick Carter's Hunt for a Treasure.
13—A Mystery of the Highway.
14—The Silent Passenger.
15—Jack Dreu's Secret.
16—Nick Carter's Pipe Line Case.
17—Nick Carter and the Gold Thieves.
18—Nick Carter's Auto Chase.
19—The Corrigan Inheritance.
20—The Keen Eye of Denton.
21—The Spider's Parlor.
22—Nick Carter's Quick Guess.
23—Nick Carter and the Murderess.
24—Nick Carter and the Pay Car.
25—The Stolen Antique.
26—The Crook League.
27—An English Cracksman.
28—Nick Carter's Still Hunt.
29—Nick Carter's Electric Shock.
30—Nick Carter and the Stolen Duchess.
31—The Purple Spot.
32—The Stolen Groom.
33—The Inverted Cross.
34—Nick Carter and Keno McCall.
35—Nick Carter's Death Trap.
36—Nick Carter's Siamese Puzzle.
37—The Man Outside.
38—The Death Chamber.
39—The Wind and the Wire.
40—Nick Carter's Three Cornered Chase.
41—Dazaar, the Arch-Fiend.
42—The Queen of the Seven.
43—Crossed Wires.
44—A Crimson Clew.
45—The Third Man.
46—The Sign of the Dagger.
47—The Devil Worshipers.
48—The Cross of Daggers.
49—At Risk of Life.
50—The Deeper Game.
51—The Code Message.
52—The Last of the Seven.
53—Ten-Ichi, the Wonderful.
54—The Secret Order of Associated Crooks.
55—The Golden Hair Clew.
56—Back From the Dead.
57—Through Dark Ways.
58—When Aces Were Trumps.
59—The Gambler's Last Hand.
60—The Murder at Linden Fells.
61—A Game for Millions.
62—Under Cover.
63—The Last Call.
64—Mercedes Danton's Double.
65—The Millionaire's Nemesis.
66—A Princess of the Underworld.
67—The Crook's Blind.
68—The Fatal Hour.
69—Blood Money.
70—A Queen of Her Kind.
71—Isabel Beon's Trump Card.
72—A Princess of Hades.
73—A Prince of Plotters.
74—The Crook's Double.
75—For Life and Honor.
76—A Compact With Dazaar.
77—In the Shadow of Dazaar. Dated March 7th, 1914.
78—The Crime of a Money King. Dated March 14th, 1914.
79—Birds of Prey. Dated March 21st, 1914.
80—The Unknown Dead. Dated March 28th, 1914.
81—The Severed Hand.

PRICE, FIVE CENTS PER COPY. If you want any back numbers of our weeklies and cannot procure them from your news dealer, they can be obtained direct from this office. Postage stamps taken the same as money.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 79-89 Seventh Ave., NEW YORK CITY